II. Military Organization

701 An army, properly speaking, with cadres and hierarchies, did not exist among the Mossi.

721 In the event of war, the Tansoba or Tampsoba (war minister) notified the canton chiefs who promptly assembled with all their able-bodied men and as many horsemen as possible.

705 The villages were charged with feeding the soldiers.

III. Judicial Organization

692 693 Justice was rendered in conformity with local customs which had been handed down from generation to generation and according to local practice.

1. By village chiefs, assisted by some of the elders, for petty affairs, pilfering, and insults.

2. The canton chief, assisted by his court dignitaries and the minister, ruled on matters concerning theft, adultery, and bodily attacks, as well as on other matters.

3. The Mogho Naba took cognizance of all matters of general interest, especially with crimes of assassination and murder. In theory, he could by himself pronounce the death sentence on the [565] nakomsé [descendants of Mogho Naba]. Contrary to general belief, a [56] kombéré (canton chief) also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many individuals have been put to 661 death merely because they were wealthy! How many village chiefs have been killed by the canton chiefs over their territories without any intervention by the Mogho Naba! The nakomsé could 565 be executed, however, only for very serious crimes, such as 684 adultery with a woman of the nobility. The guilty man was led 762 into the bush by old nakomsé; they gave him a rope with which he was expected to hang himself and thus expiate his crime.

694 Justice was free; no fee was expected or assessed. The plaintiff, ● 431 however, customarily presented the naba with a white or light gray rooster, accompanied by the traditional satchel containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

644 The Mogho Naba spends the rest of the day receiving individ-
• 431 uals who have come to see him, accepting poussoum (gifts to the chief) and giving dam, gouré, foutou (garments), etc., and listening to the praises of his courtiers.

Mogho Naba Na Tough'la, "The Mogho Naba Goes to La" (1)

1. A dependent village in the administrative district of Yako, Koudougou Circle.

173 Tradition relates that a certain Mogho Naba, Naba Warga,
644 had a favorite, the only one who knew that his preferred food was
léla (fruit of the léhinga or wild plum tree). It should be added
[267] that ordinarily anything might be chosen as a favorite food, and it should not be supposed that the Mogho Naba eats only the best foods. Obviously he does not lack choice morsels, but he cannot be expected to like everything. One day this woman asked leave to visit her home at Lá and failed to return. The Magho Naba, tired of waiting and missing his favorite food, had his horse saddled one morning and announced that he wished to go and join his wife. His ministers begged him to stay at home and asked him to put off his departure until the next day... Every morning the preparations for the departure were repeated and always there was the same pleading, up to the time of the ruler's death. His son, [61] who succeeded him, chose to follow his example. The following paragraph describes the manner in which this custom was still practiced only a few years ago.

[492] When the Mogho Naba appears in the morning, one of his horses, partially harnessed, is brought into the courtyard bearing a saddle with silver stirrups, but with the girth unbuckled. After the Mogho Naba has responded to the salutations of his ministers and the whole court and has dealt with some minor matters, he declares that he is going to Lá. The court officials, especially the Kamsaongo Naba, appear before him and say: "Sire, order them to unsaddle your horse; you shall go tomorrow." The Mogho Naba of course agrees to this, but he retires to his apartments rather

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651 Mossi circle into several administrative districts, still continue to
178 make substantial annual gifts to the Mogho Naba (cowries, cattle, and a considerable amount of grain, millet and rice).

634 Payments Due the Kombemba (canton chiefs). Formerly each
651 canton held one or more ritual feasts each year, and the Mossi subjects, that is, the tengsoba (village elders, notables, and those in comfortable circumstances), regularly made gifts to the canton chief (cowries, goats, sheep, and roosters). The Peulh [Peul] gave cattle.

The canton chiefs also retained a portion of the payment made by the people for the benefit of the Mogho Naba.

[178] At the present time these traditional gifts are still made, but white or light gray roosters are more and more being substituted for livestock. [71]

661 Payments due the Ministers of the Mogho Naba. In order to
431 maintain good relations with the ministers, court officials, and intermediaries between the emperor and his vassals, the canton
644 chiefs in former times used to present unspecified gifts to the
634 high dignitaries at court when they paid their respects to the Mogho Naba. A certain number of cowries was given to the pougtiéma, first wife of the Mogho Naba (500 cowries equals two and a half francs, formerly 50 centimes).

A canton chief who has been called to Ouagadougou for some reason may choose not to call on the emperor, but he is obligated to bring cowries, a sheep, or a rooster to the minister who is head of the province in which his canton is located.

651 Common laws. (a) Regulation of market fees. Before the ar-
443 rival of the French, market fees at Ouagadougou were collected for the benefit of the Mogho Naba by a collector in his employ.

In important villages, fees were collected by Gourounsi [Grunshi] captives on behalf of the canton chiefs (kombemba).

651 (b) Hunting. In former times, before the fields were cleared
224 for seeding, the Mossi used to go out in groups of several villages
634 on hunting drives. Small game (partridges, guinea fowl, hares, etc.) were left to the hunters. On the other hand, a haunch of any quadruped killed (deer, gazelle, coba [a kind of horse antelope], etc.) was reserved for the canton chief.

644 554 576 [101] It is to be noted that a gourdful of this water with millet flour on which a bit of karite butter is floating is a customary courtesy offering among the Mossi. It is most improper to greet or to receive a stranger by offering him plain water.

644 782 On the fourth or fifth day the Djiba Naba proceeds to Zoanghna (a village located two or three kilometers behind the government buildings) and there hands over a sheep and a cow to serve as offerings to the sacred amulets of the ancestors and to protect him from evil spirits and wicked people. He does not spend the night in this village but returns home immediately after the sacrifice.

644 788 Several days later the decision is made to install the new naba in his domain. A large number of soroné, drummers, and followers accompany him on what amounts to a kind of obligatory pilgrimage which we shall describe briefly.

The following itinerary is customary.

First, the Djiba Naba goes to Badnogo where he spends the night. The next day he goes on to Samba where he is offered water with flour in it, and for his part, he gives salt to be shared among the old women of the village.

[888] One may ask why salt is given to the old women and not to the other people. The Mossi call old women nough' pouk ramba, that is, those who, when blessing you, clasp their hands so as to make a higher power hear and grant their prayers.

644 788 431 [102] On the following day he proceeds to Tensobitenga where he remains for three days. Beer is prepared for him; he is given a cow for his followers and a wife for himself. At Nakamtenga, his next stop, the village chief welcomes him with a sheep and many baskets and bowls of sagbo (millet mush).

644 788 He does not remain here for the night but instead goes on to Koubri. This is the village where eunuchs formerly suffered the cruel operation of castration (1). The canton chief meets him, leads

839 304 681 1. Eunuchs. Bandits, thieves, murderers, and slaves or soroné (servitors) convicted of adultery with women of the nobility were the only ones sent to Koubri, a canton in the circle of Ouagadougou, to be castrated. This operation involved only the removal

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of the testicles, until the day when a eunuch managed, no one knows how, to take advantage of some of the women he was supposed to be guarding. From then on it was deemed necessary to remove the penis completely, and a copper cartridge was inserted for purposes of urination.

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As soon as the person fainted after undergoing the operation, a drink was concocted whose ingredients are unknown. When he revived, he was so thirsty that he downed the drink in a single gulp. It is said that the drug stupefied the eunuch to such a degree that he would be incapable of taking vengeance even if he had any weapons at hand.

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It was only after he had completely recovered that the victim was sent to the Mogho Naba. The latter assigned him the duty of guarding a harem or a royal tomb.

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him to his house, seats him by his side, and announces to the populace that he has just been visited by his son (Koubri Naba is a descendant of the Mogho Naba).

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He then offers the crown prince a cow and a great deal of [103] beer, and then, before he leaves, the Djiba Naba has free access to the chief's household where he takes as a wife the first nubile girl he encounters. The stay at Koubri traditionally lasted for seven days, but it could be shortened to two or three in view of the great expense involved in entertaining a prince of such high rank, especially at the present time when the canton chiefs no longer enjoy their former prestige.

The Djiba Naba continues on his way to Kombissiri where he is the guest of the canton chief. For a week, in addition to his food which must, of course, be copious and abundant quantities of beer, the crown prince also receives a cow, a sheep, and, before his departure for Doulougou, a wife.

[i.e. canton chief — Analyst]

644 788 431 The chief of the canton of Doulougou, where the prince is a guest for another week, also gives him beer, a sheep, a cow, a robe, and, finally, a wife.

At Bagamini, where he goes next, he receives from the canton chief a cow, a wife, a quiver, and arrows, presented with these significant words: "Ad locko la pema taon widi, laf ra taon neb'yé ti ya f'ba yemsé" (literally, "Take these arrows to shoot against horses and not against men, for the latter are your father's slaves and the country also belongs to him and therefore to you").

Seven days later he leaves Bagamini and goes to Ipelsé where he receives the same warm welcome. On leaving, he will take with him a cow and a wife.

He likewise remains at Ipelsé for seven days. Passing through Bedgo in the domain of the Peulh chief, the Djiba Naba chooses the finest [104] bull from the herd of cattle which must be presented to him. He likewise takes a girl from the chief's household who becomes his property. He then goes on to Guirgo where he is guest of the canton chief for a whole week. On his departure he receives a cow, a robe, and a wife from the chief.

The inhabitants of the village of Kakamsé, through which the Djiba Naba merely passes, bring him quantities of millet cakes (sagbo) and a gift of their choice (a sheep, a goat, a cow, cowries, beer, etc.).

The crown prince continues on to Kondrin and remains there for three days. In addition to sagho and dam, the chief of Kondrin is required to offer him a cow and a wife before his departure.

From there he proceeds to Béré where the chief, called Rimbissi Kasma (the oldest descendant of the Mogho Naba), gives the Djiba Naba a cow, a robe, and a wife and acts as his host for a week.

644 788 824 During the night of the seventh day, the notables of the canton of Djiba come to Béré to look for the naba. He allows himself to be led away, accompanied by only a single servitor and a groom. The rest of the escort from Ouagadougou remains behind and follows him the next morning (1).

1. Why this departure at night and seeming escape? On the route leading into his

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dominion, the Djiba Naba must pass under a tree whose branches he should be able to touch since he is on horseback. His whole future depends upon his doing so. It is from this day forward that the prince will have a long life and will succeed his father. It is believed that the tree has magical powers and that its branches will withdraw of their own accord as the prince passes by if, even though he is the emperor's eldest son, he is not the successor designated by Wendé (God).

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[105] In advance of his coming, care has been taken to find a nice dwelling suitable to house a prince who is the emperor's eldest son. With this in view, an establishment has been chosen which is well built and fairly large, one belonging to a dakangré (prosperous man), and His Highness is conducted to it. As soon as the Djiba Naba has dismounted, his involuntary host must leave his home and take shelter with one of his neighbors. He takes great care to gather all his property, money (liguidi) and wives, into one part of the house; the rest henceforth belongs to the naba. Indeed, it is not long before the establishment is enlarged and some of the huts demolished to make way for more sumptuous buildings.

As soon as the prince is installed, the displaced host receives some gifts and wives as a kind of indemnity for loss. A suitable house is built for him a few hundred meters away.

For several days, celebrations are the rule throughout the canton of Djib[illegible] All the notables and village chiefs, including neighboring canton chiefs who have not had the honor of receiving the prince, come to pay their respects to the new naba and to bring him large gifts.

The escort from Ouagadougou is then sent back [106] with many gifts. The most important nayirdamba [court dignitaries] receive wives and clothing.

Besides the wives the Djiba Naba may have had before his appointment, it is to be noted that he collected quite a harem

644 during his peregrinations. He will bestow some of these on his followers
788 and keep the prettiest for himself.

●431 In the old days, the Boulsa Naba, Boussouma Naba, Konkisitenga Naba, and all the others who were, so to speak, independent "rulers" of their lands never brought annual tribute to the Mogho Naba without sending gifts to his eldest son at Djiba.

In the same way, the canton chiefs were expected to make the same annual gifts to the Djiba Naba as to his father.

644 It should also be noted that chiefs who had quarreled with the
696 Mogho Naba and were in danger of being executed could readily obtain pardons by the expedient of buying the friendship of the Djiba Naba. The emperor, after all, was reluctant to distress his son by putting to death one of his intimates.

[107] Chapter 7

The Mossi Salute. Respect due the Home of a Naba.
The Cap. Precedence among Chiefs.
A Legend Concerning the Origins of Mossi Chiefdom.

Salutation of the Naba (Nab Pousgho)

647 The kombemba (canton chiefs) and nayirdamba (ministers and other court dignitaries), when calling upon the Mogho Naba, are required to remove their cap when they reach the threshold. They hand it to their soroné (servitors) or followers. If they did not come on horseback, they must give their néoda (shoes) to a page and walk barefoot. In a word, they remove anything which might impede the execution of the very complicated Mossi salute.

The following passages concerning the Mossi salute are taken from Father Mangin.

Mossi Salute

644 "The Moaga puts down everything, load, hat, cap, and sword,
576 removes his shoes, and sits on the ground. He folds his legs slightly and bends the upper part of his body forward. The elbows rest on the ground, spread as far apart as possible. The forearms, folded

631 The Nabitienga notifies the populace of the [140] canton that
●431 in view of his father's death he wishes to go to Ouagadougou to lay claim to the succession. He then asks the aid of every man present: 100 cowries from each ykanda (head of compound) and 50 cowries from each dakonré (bachelor). This aid is at once forthcoming unless there is rivalry for the post. In that case the villages give their help to the candidate they wish to have appointed.

When he reaches Ouagadougou, the Nabitienga makes a series of calls and presents numerous gifts.

He gives: 1) 10,000 cowries and a sheep to the minister of the Mogho Naba who has jurisdiction over him; 2) 50,000 to 100,000 cowries, depending on his importance, a horse, and sometimes a cow to the Mogho Naba himself; 3) varying quantities of cowries, depending on the importance of the person visited, to the other ministers and important personages; 4) 1,000 to 2,000 cowries and a rooster to the Zusoaba (chief eunuch) whom he visits the following morning; and finally 5) generous gifts during the rest of his stay to the bonsramba (griot), benda, luinsé, doudissi, and gangando, as well as other courtiers.

631 Nomination. A kombéré candidate may stay at Ouagadougou from twenty to thirty days or even longer. On the eve of the nomination, the Mogho Naba summons the Baloum Naba and orders him to have the Baloum Naba and orders him to have the Nabitienga provide a chicken and a sheep for his sacrifice. This is certain proof that he is going to be appointed the next day, so he very generously rewards the soroné who brings him the message.

[141] The sheep (pesgo) and the rooster (noraogo) are sent to the Mogho Naba, who has them killed in his courtyard.

The next day the Mogho Naba, as soon as he appears, summons the Ouidi Naba, the Larrhallé Naba, the Kamsoro Naba, the Gounga Naba, and the Baloum Naba, and says to them: "Today I wish to make an end of the koubissi ("children of the kouré" or funeral observances); which among the candidates here is really capable of succeeding the late chief?" The Ouidi Naba replies: "Do whatever pleases you, Sire." After this, the Mogho Naba says: "In that case, I designate the Nabitienga, for his father did not forget me an instant during his life and it would not make sense to pass over his son." Then the Mogho Naba returns to his palace.

The Ouidi Naba returns to his place, calls the Baloum Naba, the Bend Naba, and the Poé Naba, and tells them the sovereign's

631 new naba mounts his horse and goes off with the minister who has jurisdiction over him. The minister offers him some zom kom (water with flour in it) and then welcomes him into his courtyard where he is offered a canari of dam (beer) and gouré (kola nuts). He is then escorted back to the home of his gangsoba by a goodly throng of drummers, horsemen, etc.

631 All the defeated candidates are required to shave their heads
302 at once and to make a formal act of submission to the new naba as soon as he has returned to the home of his gangsoba (host). It should be added that the candidates allow their hair to grow from the day of the death of the naba to the day on which his successor is appointed.

631 The new appointee must offer dam, saghbo, and cowries to the
● 431 nayiridamba. He also offers dam, kola nuts, and cowries to the drummers.

631 On the following day he accompanies the minister to the home of the Mogho Naba. During the monarch's second audience (beg sonré),
644 the minister calls him to salute the Mogho Naba. The new naba goes forward to the tomboko, cries out three times (cries of joy), and then performs the kantissé (the Mossi salute). Thereupon, the Ouidi Naba says to the Mogho Naba: "The chief whom you deigned to honor yesterday wishes to express his gratitude." The Mogho Naba responds to the salute and then, for the first time, offers him a canari of dam.

The new naba then calls upon the ministers and other important personages (Ouidi Naba, Larrhallé Naba, Gounga Naba, [144] Poé Naba, Kamsoro Naba, Samandé Naba, the imam, Daporé Naba, and the next day the Zusoaba).

Seven days later the Mogho Naba gives him a robe, a pougla (red fez), a nagpouré (cushion), and néoda (slippers).

The new naba removes his old ragged clothes (I use the description advisedly, since custom forbids him to change his clothes until he has received those given by the Mogho Naba). He gives the discarded garments to a relative, dresses in the robe from the Mogho Naba, puts on the pougla (fez), and becomes a true naba.

631 A few days later he asks permission to return to his own lands. Many court representatives (nayirdamba) accompany him. It is the

631 duty of these representatives to assemble the notables of the villages and to order them to submit to the new naba, the only one recognized by the Mogho Naba.

631 In order to show their joy,[1] the people have large quantities of
527 beer prepared, and games are organized which may continue for several days. The village notables come to offer their submission and to swear fealty, bringing gifts (cowries, sheep, etc.) in accordance with the resources of the village and the wealth of the inhabitants.

631 When the nayirdamba leave for Ougadougou, the naba gives:
431 a wife and a robe to the Bilbalga; a wife and a robe to the soroné of the Mogho Naba; a wife and a robe to the soroné or the Baloum-Naba; a wife and a robe to the child of the Bend'Naba; etc.

Any children born to the women [145] so given belong, respectively, to the masters of these representatives.

631 Burial. Their burial is carried out in much the same manner
766 as in the case of the Mogho Naba, except for the specific persons involved. The arrangement of the tomb is also similar, although there is, of course, less pomp displayed. [146]

[1] [i.e. At the appointment of the new naba—Analyst]

Chapter 9

The Two Major Mossi Festivals

Mossi Festivals

796 In actual fact, there is only one annual festival celebrated by
527 the Mossi. It is known as tinsé or tingana. A second festival, which is more a family affair, is called basgha. The latter is variously named, depending on the region: for the Mogho Naba, it is called m'barengma; for the ordinary Moaga, basgha; in certain regions, kinkirga; etc. Although the date for the first festival is fixed by the Mogho Naba, the second festival is celebrated by each canton chief, each village chief, or each ikanda (married man) on any day that suits him, usually after the harvest.

In addition to these principal festivals, every important village has its annual festival, a kind of special market day. On

796 Friday night he stays at the home of Bangr'Naba Sambo. Very early
769 Saturday morning he returns home in time to be present when the Bend'Naba (chief of the drummers) comes to wish him a happy new year and a long life and to pray that Wenam (God) will spare him to [156] offer many more bascé (plural of basgha) in honor of his predecessors.

[431] It goes without saying that during the nights spent away from home the emperor receives many visitors and substantial gifts. The persons at whose homes he spends the night naturally give him the warmest possible welcome.

Preparatory sacrifices. These are performed inside the house of the Mogho Naba, and the details are known only to the following four persons: Mogho Naba, Emperor of the Mossi; Baloum Naba, chief steward and chief of pages; Zussoba Kassanga, chief eunuch and guardian of the harem; the pugtiéma, the first wife of the Mogho Naba.

796 It is known that animals are sacrificed, with the Mogho Naba
769 himself holding the victim and pronouncing the sacramental words.
782 Perhaps there is also worship of certain sacred fetishes. In any event, we are convinced that there is nothing involved in the ceremony which is contrary to the principles of French civilization since there is no human sacrifice. We should have liked very much to describe these ancient practices, but the secret has been well kept.

Celebration of basgha. As soon as the Mogho Naba appears in
796 front of the zango (antechamber), the Bend' Naba beats a drum while
769 calling the names of deceased naba, beginning with Naba Oubri, the
533 founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty. [157]

As soon as the Bend'Naba stops playing, he and his followers are served sagbo (millet cakes), mouï (rice), dam (millet beer), and nemdo (meat).

796 Likewise, the ministers and other court officials who come to
769 greet tabo (the new year) are given dam, sagbo, rice, and meat by
[554] the Mogho Naba. The food is distributed to the dignitaries in the order of precedence, and the rest is reserved for the Bilbalessé and other followers of the ministers.

[576] About eight-thirty, the ministers and court officials say wennatassé, "God be with us," which means good bye, and then they return home.

769 they return to their homes.
796 The Bend'Naba and other drummers remain in the courtyard un-
533 til the Sogon' kassanga (chief eunuch) bring to them, on behalf of the emperor, the sum of 10,000 cowries and some beer. In the old days a young captive, seated amidst the cowries, accompanied these gifts. The messengers say to the drummers: "Nab'yet b'wa poustabo (the king sends us to give you these gifts on the occasion of his basgha)."

The chief of the drummers pours a drink for the Zussoba and orders his followers to play together "Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss'Naba nioré, Wenna wilig'vinré" (literally, "We thank the king for his gifts. May God give the Mogho Naba long life and allow us to come back to play here next year").

Before sending them away, the Mogho Naba is obligated to give a karfo (black robe [158] imported by the Haoussa) to the Bend' Naba and a robe to the Loun Naba (chief of the luinsé). Water with flour in it is likewise brought to the Bend'Naba, and he scatters it about the courtyard. The emperor is required by custom to walk upon this water of gnimassem (of good health) as he goes back to his apartments.

When all these formalities have been completed, the Bend'Naba, accompanied by his bards, takes his leave. The festival is over.
● [431] On the days following, the drummers call on the ministers and the other court dignitaries and are given many gifts (cowries and livestock).

All of these gifts are retained by the Bend'Naba or by someone chosen by him, and they are distributed later, with due regard for the hierarchy existing among the griot. The share of the older men is always greater than that accorded to the younger ones. [159]

Chapter 10

The Wives of the Naba. The sogoné. The Pogsioure

Naba Warga and the Origin of the Sogoné

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644 Naba Warga was constantly at war with the Riziam Naba, who
357 was called Mamzi (which means "I myself do not know"). He had

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595 foreigners who are being housed by the naba. [164]

644 Each sogoné or samanbiga chooses a mother from among the
595 wives of the naba (only those in the first two sections).

595 He helps her to cultivate her plot of ground and receives in
357 return a little food over and above the ration of sagbo given to the
608 sogoné as a group.

At Nanore (1), for example, it was formerly the rule that

1. Canton in the administrative district of Koudougou.

when a woman brought some sagbo to her adopted son, she could not simply hand it to him. Instead, holes were dug in the courtyard of the naba, into which the woman put the sagbo and sauce. Then the young man came to eat the food, and later the woman came back for her bowls.

644 Finally, it is still forbidden for anyone to play a guitar when
595 a napagha is passing by unless the player is the naba himself or
533 someone called upon to play by the naba. It should be noted that
687 the Moaga prefers the guitar for intimate occasions. Therefore, to
832 play it when a napagha passes by is actually to court her.

The Pogsiouré, or the Recruitment of Sogoné and Saman'kamba

643 Aside from a few special cases limited by custom which we
562 shall presently describe, the naba can never dispose of the daughters of his subjects, either to make them [165] his own wives or to bestow them on someone else, without the permission of the parents.

Pogsiouré comes from pog', the diminutive of pagha, "woman," and from siouré, diminutive of sioubo, "to give anticipating a profit."

562 As a result of family quarrels or even voluntarily, a Moaga
431 "may give away his daughters and those of his brothers and close
643 relatives to the naba." It is obvious that the naba cannot keep all of these girls, so he gives some of them to his brothers, his uncles, his sons, and even to ordinary Mossi who have done him a service.

In the same way -- and this is more frequent -- every sogoné (page) or samand'biga [singular of samand'kamba] (bodyguard or

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431 groom) who has served his naba satisfactorily receives, at the
643 time he is freed, a young girl who may be nubile, but who may, on the other hand, be just a small child.

In either case, the former servitor is required to call upon the naba from time to time and to take him gifts (cowries or roosters). If the girl is still living with her relatives, in addition to his trifling presents to the naba, the fiancé may make a few presents to his in-laws, although it is not obligatory.

562 Pogsiouré. The first daughter born of a marriage between a
643 Moaga subject (former servitor, son, brother, or uncle of the naba,
644 etc.) and the woman given to him [166] by the naba becomes the
858 "property" of the latter with full rights over her. She is known as "the daughter of the pogsiouré" and is fated to become pogsiouré in her turn.

643 If the first-born is a boy, the naba may bring him to his
644 court as soon as he reaches the age of discretion to make him either
858 a sogoné or a samand'biga, and the child's father cannot make the
357 slightest objection.

This does not imply that under Mossi law the sogoné and samand'kamba must be children of the pogsiouré. As absolute master of all his subjects, the naba can recruit his servitors throughout his domain as he needs them, with no opposition by the Mossi to this recruitment.

644 The fate of the daughters of the pogsiouré. The girls are
858 taken from their relatives as soon as they are old enough to work
562 and are entrusted by the naba to his own wives.

The latter, for all practical purposes, become the adoptive mothers of these children and, as such, see to their food and clothing. This does not prevent the real mother from bringing cowries and clothing to her daughter, and to make sure that the child will be well treated by the napagha (wife of the naba), she sometimes
[431] even brings the latter a gift of kalgo (soumbala) or karite butter (kamé).

When the girls reach puberty, the naba chooses the most at-
[584] tractive for his fiancées, and the [167] others are given to some of his administrators or to his own relatives.

562 When the girl reaches marriageable age, she usually finds herself
584 with a husband who is sometimes older than her father and whom she cannot possibly love. She must go to him, however, since such is her father's will.

[173] The fiancé brings some gifts (cowries, chickens, millet
[583] beer) and claims his wife. The girl is sent off to her husband's home with no ceremony being performed.

This second type of forced marriage has the parents' consent.

587 Marriage by inheritance. When the head of a household dies, the
428 women, who are considered a part of his estate, are divided up just as is the rest of the property. They are apportioned to the sons of
562 the deceased, or his brothers if the sons are not of marriageable age.
768 However, unlike the procedure for a chief's estate, in which the wife is just a "thing," these wives may choose their husbands from among the members of the family.

This is semi-free marriage.

587 Besides the type of marriage which we shall later call "free marriage" -- a form which occurs very frequently since it includes the marriages of loose women who may have as many as nine husbands, only stopping at the last one because of old age -- there is also remarriage due to successive widowhoods. Some women are so
[177] unlucky as to lose [174] a succession of husbands. They are finally avoided like the plague since they have the reputation of being cursed by the gods (Mossi, kombwinga; Bambara, tërédiougou).

584 Marriage after a conventional proposal. When a young man wishes to ask for the hand of a young girl who is not yet engaged, he chooses as his go-between a person who is on good terms with the elders of the girl's village. If the response is favorable, the young man brings a chicken, a secco (dagnopinri) [coarse matting] to close the doorway, and some fagots. He goes back to his village and returns at intervals bearing sprouted millet or millet beer and a chicken for the head of the family. The latter at last tells the go-between: "Tell X... that we accept him as our son and that we shall try to give him satisfaction as soon as possible."

Some time later the young man returns once more with a chicken, sprouted millet, or beer for the elders of the village. He makes

585 The following morning the new wife returns to the hut of her "mother." She is summoned by her husband several nights in a row before he resumes the practice of receiving each wife in turn.

The Bride Price. The Basket of the Fiancée

583 Bride price. Mossi custom does not require a bride price. The one thousand to several thousand cowries that are required, depending on the man's resources, plus chickens, a sheep and beer, are not a bride price, properly speaking, or "selling a daughter." Nothing is asked which could not be repaid one day without too much difficulty.

585 The fiancée's basket. The basket of the fiancée contains the girl's clothes, some soap, some karite butter, some cowries, gourds, and ladles. The basket is carried by one of the women in the cortege.

The cortege. The fiancée's cortege is usually composed of a young girl, a woman who has borne children, and a boy.

They proceed to the house of the village elder. [182] The relatives of the bridegroom provide food for them for several days. Finally, they are given a farewell dinner consisting of baskets of millet cakes and mutton, goat, or merely some chickens. They are also given cowries.

585 In addition to these gifts, the sum of 444 or 1,400 cowries (the 431 "virginity price") is sewn into a sack and sent to the girl's mother. If the bride was given by a chief, he is entitled to from 2,000 to 3,000 cowries if the husband is an ordinary Moaga, 10,000 to 50,000 cowries if the husband himself is a naba. In this last case, the women in the cortege receive skirts, and the boy, a robe.

585 Note. While it is true that among many peoples a girl goes to her 152 husband joyfully, it is quite the contrary in Mossi country. There is a real struggle to separate the girl from her parents. Many lose sleep and their appetites. On the day of departure they weep bitterly, and those who do not are insulted by the old women.

428 2. Not to be disqualified for the following causes.

a. Murder of the deceased.

b. Failure to avenge his death. In the old days the son had to avenge his father's death before inheriting his property. At present the term "vengeance" should be understood to mean that he must seek satisfaction for the crime in the courts.

c. Failure to celebrate the funeral.

If the legitimate heir is a minor, his guardian must carry out the ceremony in the child's name.

d. Existence of a will whereby the deceased disinherits the heir presumptive.

Order of succession. As a general rule, property is handed down in the direct line, that is, to the eldest son of the deceased. It is handed down in a collateral line only if there is no son. In the case of certain items, however, for example, the family fetish, the heir is the eldest brother of the deceased.

If there is no heir of the first or second degree, the estate goes to the closest relative of the person from whom the deceased inherited the property.

428 The eldest in the family excludes the others and has sole
431 possession of the property. Custom demands, however, that he hand over to his brothers and uncles a part [258] of the property. Nevertheless, this is a free gift which he is not actually forced to make.

428 In the case of the estate of a naba, the eldest son alone usually
562 inherits all the property left by the deceased because of the heavy
184 expenses he must meet to follow custom when he becomes a candidate for the chiefdom. As far as the women are concerned -- they are a part of the property -- he selects the ones he likes, and the rest are left for the nabissi (sons and descendants of naba).

The same is not true for ordinary Mossi, who have begun to realize that there are advantages in allowing all of the children of the deceased to share in the estate. In the chapter dealing with "Marriage" we have already seen that women were allowed some choice of a husband among the sons of the deceased.

428 In any case, however, the eldest son retains the largest share of the estate, and this is easily understandable in view of the

644 with its tall copper stirrups, bears on either side a larger copper tray.
[492] The drums are played when the naba leaves his dwelling, shift to a different tune when he places his foot in the stirrup, and shift once more when he sets out on his way. The whole population over a radius of several kilometers is thus apprised of the Moro Naba's every gesture. A page precedes him bearing his pillow, and another carrying his scepter. The ministers present at the court and the foreign chiefs present at the capital hasten to mount their horses. Several of the Moro Naba's bodyguards accompany him: four strapping fellows walk by his side, their arms leaning against the horse's rump as though to prevent the monarch from falling, while horsemen armed with spears do a fantasia, running 100 meters ahead of the naba, brandishing their spears, returning at full gallop, and setting off again. This constant coming and going entertains the naba who does not gallop.

631 /19/ Every province and canton chief has his court, his ministers,
644 his pages, his drummers. Eunuchs, however, are solely the prerogative of the Moro Naba. In order to qualify for pages, pillow, and spurs, a chief must be invested properly. The present naba of Koupéla who failed to follow the traditions possesses none of these privileges.

The investiture of nabas follows a complex tradition. Each naba invests his own vassals in office. The Moro Naba invests the province chiefs, except for those who hold the title dimma; the province chiefs invest the canton chiefs, and the latter invest the chiefs of villages within their jurisdiction. The right of nomination is an important source of revenue for the nabas.

622 Upon the death of a village chief, several candidates vie for power.
431 They all go to the naba who rules over them, to greet him and to offer him numerous gifts, cowries, chickens, sheep, and, if they are sufficiently wealthy, salt bars, a horse, sometimes even a wife. The one who gives the most has the best chance of being chosen, and the naba decides to announce his choice only when he feels that the candidates are running out of gifts.

622 In Koupéla, a village chief under the direct jurisdiction of the province chief is nominated in the following way. The candidates must apply to the minister who has control over their village. He is the indispensable intermediary between them and the naba who is to make the choice, he is their guide, their sor'soba. When the nomination draws near, the minister goes at night to see the naba, and together they agree on the choice to be made. They may appoint

631 powers to his vassals, the province chiefs, who in turn entrust them to the canton chiefs, and these do likewise with the village chiefs. Thus, when a native wants to move from one canton to another, or 631 even from one village to another, he must be authorized to do so. 166 He must request the permission of the canton or village chief to settle 425 in such-and-such a place, and the chief of the village where he wants to live tells him where he may build his huts and which field he may cultivate. The naba may dispossess one of his subjects, if he so wishes, and give his field to another. After all, he "has the strength." This rarely happens, however, and a native who has cleared a piece of bush, fertilized a plot to sow maize, sowed and weeded the ground, is usually assured of a harvest, except in case of war. If a man is evicted, on the other hand, there is no appeal; neither the canton chief nor the province chief would listen to him; they would do the same thing if the opportunity arose.

421 There is no communal property. Every individual works his fields for his own account; he himself collects the fruit of his labor and remains its undisputed master. Nevertheless, every native owes his 651 chiefs and benefactors a tithe; and at harvest time it is interesting 431 to watch everyone sorting ears of maize, braiding sorghum stems, and measuring out baskets of small millet. The village chief is to get so many ears of maize; the canton chief, if he does not reside too far away, so many others; the father- or fathers-in-law will get theirs, and so will one friend or another to whom one owes cowries, or who has previously granted a favor. However, everyone who deals out goods right and left will in-turn get some from various other people and approximately regain his expenditure. The village chiefs offer more sizable gifts to the canton chiefs, and the latter do likewise to the province chiefs.

651 These were, in fact, taxes, not fixed taxes per capita, but com- 661 pletely arbitrary ones. If the naba found a gift insufficient, he had no compunction about saying so, and the person involved had to comply. It is said that the naba of Koupéla paid annually 500,000 cowries (500 francs) and /23/ three horses to the naba of Bélousa, and a million cowries (1000 francs) in two installments to the Moro Naba, to whom he also gave five horses. The gifts to the Moro Naba were brought first to the naba of Bélousa and from there conveyed to Ouagadougou: ever the hierarchy.

This quasi-official tax, however, was not the only one. Whenever the Moro Naba wanted horses, cattle, or anything whatever, he

651 had a province chief notified, and everyone hastened to carry out his
661 wishes. If a province chief in turn wanted something, if he was short of millet or wished to build huts, he had one or several canton chiefs notified, and these in turn advised the village chiefs; through them everything was slowly carried out, for it took time to transmit these orders, but the common man never failed to comply.

Such a system made it impossible for an individual to accumulate wealth. A surplus of goods would have aroused the naba's cupidity, and he would have found some excuse to tax this overly enterprising subject more than the others. This is why those who owned a few cows carefully concealed it by entrusting them to the Peul. The latter could not hope to increase their herds rapidly, because the nabas were always in need of fine, fat cattle for some alleged sacrifice or festivity.

651 At certain times the canton chiefs and even the village chiefs,
661 as well as people desirous of making a good impression, must go to the
431 naba to greet him and to present him with gifts which never amount to less than 500 cowries (50 francs). When the naba undertakes an important task, such as the building of several huts, the weeding of his field, or the harvesting of his millet, some of the people are summoned to help him, and it is proper for the others to come and offer him gifts. His convalescence from illness is an occasion for gifts also, and, if he has eluded some danger, he must quickly be congratulated and given cowries. On every festive day or on the days following, each naba must go to his province chief to greet him and to bring him gifts in proportion to the importance of his own position. Whenever the naba travels, every village where he stops must give him food and drink, and thus offer him chickens, goats, sheep, or even a cow if the village is sufficiently important. The grooms and other servants in the retinue of the naba manage for themselves at the expense of the inhabitants. This is quite a burden, especially since the naba, when he returns home, expects more greetings and cowries.

726 War was another important source of revenue. Binger describes what he witnessed at the court of Boukari-Koutou, who was later Moro Naba under the name of Naba Wobro and who was deposed by Voulet's arrival. Before leaving for war, the sorcerers were consulted and indicated the tangandé or sacred grove where a sacrifice was to be made in order to insure victory. The province chief then took out his flag, a mere staff with charms and a cow's tail hanging at

582 Marriage is exogamous, that is, relatives do not marry if their
564 kinship is known. There are no sharply defined caste lines. The Mossi marry Yarsé Malinké, Bousanse, and Gourounsi, but cannot marry Peul nor Haoussa. A Mossi who does not belong to a caste may choose his wife among Mossi who do belong to one. The latter do not intermarry freely; iron workers cannot marry from among the drummers.

584 But to go back to our story. The girl has grown. The suitor has already made numerous gifts. In short, the time has come to proceed with the wedding. The girl's father /31/ summons the betrothed and tells him: "Come and see me on such-and-such a day with a chicken." The suitor joyfully returns to his village and tells the elders that he was told to bring a chicken. On the day set, the suitor takes the bird to the girl's family, accompanied by his friends. He hands over the chicken, and everyone goes to the home of the head of the family, or, in his absence, to a village elder. The father states before all present that he wishes to give his daughter to So-and-So. Congratulations are exchanged, and everyone goes home. Now the festivities must be arranged, the relatives and friends must be notified, and the millet beer must be brewed. Meanwhile, the relatives and friends who have heard the good news come to greet the bridegroom and bring him fifty or a hundred cowries to help him meet the expenses of the festivities.

When everything is ready, the bridegroom takes 500 cowries and a rooster to the girl's father and 500 cowries to the elder in whose household the bride shall live until her wedding day. The girl's relatives have prepared dinner, while the bridegroom provides the
[302] drink. A relative of the groom shaves the bride's forehead in a circle, and she retires to the inner courtyard where her father's wives wash her thoroughly and tie a cotton cord around her waist. She dons a white garment and goes to offer a gourd of beer to her betrothed who has remained outside with his friends. Everyone thanks the girl's parents and then they all leave. On the day after next, the groom
[431] sends his friends to greet the family of his betrothed with a basket of millet flour, four kalro pellets, and salt, which are all distributed among the village people. These festivities, with their attendant ceremonies, come closest to a formal betrothal.

585 The girl, however, remains with the head of the family or with the elder who takes his place! When all these preliminary ceremonies are over, the groom sends daily for his bride. Once the trousseau has

585 been gathered together in a basket — clothes varying in number with the family's wealth, gourds, a pot for the sauce, a wooden spoon to stir the millet mush — the father tells the groom's messenger that the wedding date has been set for a certain day, nearly always on a Friday, sometimes Thursday. For the second time, the groom prepares the festivities and again the food and the drink. In the evening, his friends go out to meet the bride who is accompanied by her family. When nearing the village, they all let loose merry cries, "you, you", the bride pretends to run away, and the young men run after her and bear her on their shoulders to the head of the groom's family or to one of his uncles. And the party begins. The men eat millet mush [262] and a chicken; the women, millet mush and a guinea hen. They all drink beer, dance, and sing.

[302] On the following morning, the groom's relatives shave the bride's head, and that of her husband if she is his first wife, because their way of life has changed: the young man has become the master of a hut, and the young girl a wife. In the evening, the friends and relatives of the new husband go to the bride's village bearing in this order: a sheep killed at the husband's house, jars of beer, and finally the sarabo /millet mush/. The bride's relatives follow in complete silence /32/ and without greeting anybody. When they arrive at the home of the bride's family, the bearer of the sheep and the women who carry the millet beer and sarabo go into the inner courtyard and put down their loads; then they come but and dance, while the in-laws have the food transferred to other containers. The jars are returned to the bearers, who are driven away with blows by millet stalks and a sprinkling of water mixed with ashes.

All the while, the bride stays in the soukala of the elder, watched closely by his first wife. She remains shut in for several days, until the elder finally decides to send her to her husband. His wife prepares millet mush, sauce, and meat, and brings a jug of beer. The old women assemble and accompany the bride to the home of her husband. He returns the courtesy to the elder on the following day. Henceforth, they are married at long last.

If the new husband is prosperous, he goes to thank his in-laws a [431] few days after the festivities. In leather pouches sewn all around, he offers 1, 300 cowries to his father-in-law and 1, 400 to his mother-in-law. If he can, he also offers beer, two chickens, and a sheep. These last gifts are less essential, but if he fails to offer the cowries, the in-laws may seize his wife's children and keep them until the thank-you gifts have been received.

585 184 It should be noted that these ceremonies are often curtailed. They may also vary in ways that will not be described here. Sometimes they may not take place at all. This happens when the girl already has a husband prior to her birth, or when she is part of an inheritance. In such cases her relatives merely take her to her husband.

585 782 No sacrifices are performed during the marriage ceremonies. The husband does offer a sacrifice on the day he builds a hut for his wife, and at the place where the structure is to be erected. The girl's mother consults the sorcerer a few times to find out if her daughter will be welcomed in her new home, and to know which sacrifice must be offered to ward off illness while she lives with her husband. She communicates the answer to the girl's father, and he himself offers the prescribed sacrifice.

602 431 In theory, the husband owes nothing else to his in-laws. In practice, he would hold himself in poor esteem if he were not to present them with a few more gifts, especially on important feast days. When his maize is harvested, he sets aside a few ears for his wife's relatives; when his millet is threshed, he is sure to send some to his father-in-law; whenever he organizes any sort of festivity, his in-laws are invited; and he personally helps them in their work.

586 There is no divorce in the formal sense of a judgment rendered by law. A husband may send his wife back to her relatives if she steals, if she is lazy, or especially if she commits adultery, but even in the latter case his action will be regarded with disapproval. It is a husband's duty to watch over his wife and, if necessary, to discipline her. The man who repudiates his wife makes himself unpopular and cannot obtain new wives. It also happens, and this occurs more frequently, that the wife runs away and goes back to her family, /33/ either because she complains of ill treatment, or because she is not happy with her husband, or for some other reason of a more or less dubious character. If the husband manages to catch up with her before she gets home, no great problem is involved. He merely beats her and shuts her in for a few days. If she does reach her relatives, especially if they are in connivance, the husband must present a few gifts to them and even to his wife. The in-laws usually try to convince their daughter to return to her husband, but they do not force her to do so. Even the naba, when called upon to intervene, limits himself to the use of moral authority; his threats usually persuade the woman to return to her husband, who may himself use force if he wishes.

782 Friday evening. The sacrifice is the usual one described earlier, but
769 the invoking formula is replaced with the following: "Soul of my
796 father, stretch out your hand and take this chicken which I offer you; grant me to reach next year in good health, and I will return with another chicken." The chicken killed on the grave is not roasted as in other sacrifices, but cooked in water.

On those days one must be careful not to sleep outside. The souls come to drink beer from the vats, and woe to those who lie in their way. They will kill them or at least make them seriously ill.

782 On the feast day itself, all those who have some obligation toward
769 the naba or toward the man who is holding the festivities, such as
796 those to whom he has given a wife or who have asked him for one,
1131 come to greet him with a rooster and cowries if they did not come on the previous day. Many of his subjects, especially the canton chiefs, also come to offer their rooster and cowries. On the other hand, if an important visitor comes on that day, it is an elementary rule of civility to offer him a rooster.

782 Usually, on the very day of the festivities, no sacrifices are offered
769 on the graves. The victims are offered to the protective kikirsi of
796 the hut, of the inner courtyard, of the outer courtyard, of the whole soukala. The number of sacrificed chickens varies in proportion to the number of gifts. When the sacrifices are over, the naba assembles his people, and the beer is brought in and presented to him. He first pours a little on the ground as an offering to the ancestral spirits, then he drinks and distributes the ars among his people. This is not
[273] a good day to discuss important matters, because after noon everybody is more or less drunk.

On the following Monday and Wednesday, the naba proceeds at dawn with great pomp to two neighboring villages (Nakalbo and Sabré) to sacrifice a beef to the tangandé. Much feasting ensues there on those two days; the naba loses a beef /in each village/ but gains many chickens and a few thousand cowries. He also goes to the village of Toulgou on the day when basra is celebrated in that locality, because his family originated there.

527 The kibsa is the Moslem sheep feast, and it is celebrated forty days after the end of the great feast. All Mossi celebrate it in private; every family has brewed millet beer, and on that day millet mush is replaced with rice and meat. These festivities are even more intimate than the previous ones in the sense that they are held

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
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obligations to the Moro-naba, his lands were raided, his women seized and, if he were caught, he was killed.

It is difficult to ascertain how the institution of provincial administrators arose among the Mossi. Some of the people still believe that the ministers were formerly slaves of the Moro-naba, but Delobsom claims that the first ministers were warrior companions of Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty.[4] These men were not members of the royal lineage and thus were inferior in status to the members of the royal lineage and sublineages under their supervision. However, as emissaries of the Moro-naba, these ministers were entitled to respect by all the people. The ministers recommended successors to vacant district chieftainships; thus it was incumbent upon a district chief to be friendly with his minister if he wished succession to go to his eldest son.

The minister was the person who carried orders from the Moro-naba to the district chiefs, and he reported back to the Moro-naba on conditions in the district he visited. However, the minister could not interfere in the internal affairs of a district, nor could the district chief complain to the Moro-naba about a minister. Everyone was required to observe the strict hierarchy; the only sanction that the district chief exercised over his minister was to appeal to another minister in the hope that the Moro-naba would come to his aid.

The districts that comprised the provinces of the ministers were scattered around the country and were not equal in size or importance. One minister, the Baloum-naba, controlled the districts ruled over by those chiefs who were the sons of recent rulers. Another, the Kamsoro-naba, a eunuch, had control of the largest and wealthiest districts, but he, in contrast to the other ministers, was not succeeded by sons and, when he died, the Moro-naba inherited all of his property. The ministers frequently became very wealthy because they received gifts whenever their charges went to Ouagadougou to pay homage to the ruler. The people from the districts under their control provided labor for their fields and for the upkeep of their houses. The ministers also received bribes from persons seeking vacant district chieftainships.

When a district chief or Kombéré died, his heirs sent a horse or a sheep with leaves on its tail to notify the ruler of the death. The Moro-naba always questioned the envoys, and when he was satisfied that his man had not met with foul play, he sent the animal to his chief minister. The Moro-naba then sent his own envoys to the late chief's house with offerings for sacrifices to their common ancestors, and also instructed the envoys to collect the death offerings from the chief's relatives. After the funeral the eldest son of the dead chief and the other pretenders went to Ouagadougou bearing gifts to the district minister and the other important men surrounding the ruler. When the time came to name the new district chief, the Moro-naba called his ministers together and asked them: "Which one of the candidates is really capable of succeeding the late chief?"

583 couscous, which he offers to the relatives. Then he takes the girl
591 away. He asks a neighbor for a hut to harbor the young couple on their wedding night and over the next few weeks. They stay there for only a month or two, until their soukala is built.

583 The bride price actually varies from region to region among the Mossi. We have just seen it range from 2,000 to 50,000 cowries. Earlier, we saw it set at 25,000. At Kombisiguiri it amounts to a mere 1,000. The young man's father visits the young girl's father with a chicken and 500 cowries; then he comes to see him a second time, again with a chicken and 500 cowries. There is no other bride price. Those who do not have a chicken to offer replace it with a bundle of firewood or a straw séko. In short, a girl here is worth 30 sous (the two chickens being worth 0.50 franc between them, and the 1,000 cowries amounting to one franc).

591 Among rich people the young couple may remain seven, nine, or even twelve months in their neighbors' house. They present the [431] latter with gifts, and during this period of time they proceed to build a soukala, or rather to have one built. The young man's father helps his son in this undertaking.

593 The young husband, now settled on his own, will henceforth
431 work on his own account. He has become in turn the head of a
626 soukala, but if he obtains a lot of millet or other grain he offers gifts to his father. If he becomes wealthy and makes no such gifts, the neighbors will insult him. He always makes gifts, therefore, for fear of being insulted. A son who marries, as a rule, builds his soukala as near as possible to that of his father.

543 Finally, let us add that the father usually buys his son's kitchen utensils when the boy settles on his own.

428 3. When the head of a family dies, the younger brother inevi-
593 tably takes command of the family, but all the property, whatever its nature, goes to the children of the deceased and more especially to his oldest son. There is no longer any family real estate or movable property, or else nothing is regarded as such any longer.

/550/ The eldest son takes his father's soukala and everything that goes with it, fields, slaves, livestock, father's wives. He shares them, however, with his brothers and even with his sisters.

565 171 were, conquerors. This represents a higher level of social complexity and development, in short, a higher level of civilization.

565 556 The nakomsé were and still are gathered in separate villages scattered throughout the territory. They did the same work as other Mossi, but prior to the French occupation they also practiced looting, which was their chief expedient, their major source of wealth. True, this manner of acquiring wealth had lent them improvident habits. Nowadays they own no more small livestock than the Mossi populace, and only a little more large livestock, while they should own much more in view of their former opportunities to acquire wealth. They immediately "ate up" what they looted, however, counting on future pillage. Nowadays they no longer loot, but they seem to have preserved their former improvident habits. It should be noted, however, that they own considerably more horses than other Mossi.

565 142 I saw at Pirigui, in January, 1909, one of those villages of chiefs' sons. There were altogether 841 inhabitants of the nobility with their families and their slaves. Those people would be interesting to study from the point of view of physical anthropology. There were faces totally at variance with Negro faces, truly distinguished physiognomies, oriental and semitic casts of features, in short, enough /579/ to strike an observer even though unfamiliar with physical anthropology.

642 The superstructure of the Mossi state thus consisted of a supreme chief, a carefully established hierarchy of chiefs, and a class of nobles to whom important privileges were granted.

651 As for taxes, "every year at the end of the winter season, prior to our occupation," says Moulins, "the canton chiefs had to come, greet the Moro Naba, and offer him certain gifts (beeves, sheep, millet) which constituted a sort of fixed due." This was the common tax levied after each harvest.

"In addition, whenever the sovereign needed anything whatever, he requested the province chiefs to secure it for him. They summoned the canton chiefs, who in turn gathered the village chiefs, who secured through the soukala chiefs the animals, grain, cowries, and other items requested.

[431] "Finally, whenever a native, chief or common man, came to the Moro Naba, he offered a present to the latter.

793 never offers sacrifices himself to the Earth at Ouagadougou, nor does
174 he have them offered by the Gandé Naba, his minister of religion. He entrusts with this task the Ouagadougou Naba, who is a grandson of the autochtonous inhabitants and thus favorably regarded by the local divinities. Similarly, when the Moro Naba sacrifices to the hillocks surrounding Ouagadougou, he entrusts the local chief with the offerings and the physical sacrifice. Now, what the Moro Naba still does at Ouagadougou was no doubt done by other Mossi chiefs throughout the land after conquest, once the submission of the autochtonous inhabitants had been ensured by force of arms. Hence, the institution of the Tensoba.

One might object that Earth chiefs are also to be found in Gourounsi territory, although the Gourounsi are independent. We know, however, that the present-day Gourounsi cantons were not the achievement of the Gourounsi themselves but of minor Mossi dynasties established in the territory. Under the circumstances, the same substitution of conquering chiefs for conquered chiefs has occurred there as in Mossi territory, with the same consequences.

793 "The Tensoba," says Marc, p. 157, "whose title means 'Master of the Earth,' stands in opposition to the naba who is a military chief....

"The Tensoba is the indispensable mediator between the ancestors and their living descendants. It is he who conducts the funeral ceremonies and who decides on the honors to be rendered on the Day of the Dead. It is to him that one appeals in case of an epidemic or any public misfortune, since misfortunes are always due to the evil inclinations of ancestors that must be allayed."

793 643 839 718 [431] /596/ Actually, the institution of the Earth chief does not strip the village and canton chiefs of all religious powers. In some areas, as Marc pointed out, the Earth chiefs have gradually vanished, and the political chiefs have become religious chiefs as well. They perform sacrifices on the bara's advice, without failing to make a gift of some sort (100 or 1,000 cowries) to the latter also. By the same token and up to a point, the Moro Naba is invested with a religious character and with religious attributes. It is he, as we have already seen, who orders the performance of sacrifices to the Earth, to the hills. Every year during the dry season, he has a donkey sacrificed to Naba Koutou, a former Moro Naba, in the hut where the latter is buried. Prior to our occupation it was a eunuch who performed

584 daughter; (2) when the father is in extreme penury, he gives his still
596 unpromised daughter to some rich native who, with the customary gifts,
will help him in his need, since the gifts of the fiancé go to the man
who promised the young girl; (3) the first daughter in a household,
[603] whether or not she is the only daughter, must be promised by her
maternal grandfather and not by the head of the family."

This constitutes, I believe, a curious vestige of matriarchy which doubtless refers to those very distant times when the Mossi family revolved around the maternal rather than the paternal line.

4. The mother of the young girl. "The girl's mother," says Vadier, "is sometimes consulted. Her husband merely asks her if she is satisfied with the choice he has made in agreement with the head of the family. Her answer, however, is given no weight whatever.

"The fiancé's mother is not even consulted."

Such at least is the theory. In reality, no doubt, the mother of the young girl often has more authority than the theory supposes.

431 Gifts.—Bride price is nonexistent in Mossi marriage. This is a very
583 important point which differentiates the Mossi and even, I believe,
[71] the Voltaic /237/ tribes in general, from the Mandé groups, such as the Bambara and Malinké, where bride price does exist and is actually quite high (I say quite high, considering the general poverty of the Sudanese). I did not emphasize this sufficiently in my Noir du Soudan in the chapter concerning the Mossi family, pages 548 and 549. I did mention that the price paid to win a Mossi girl of the Ouagadougou region ranged from 1, 500 cowries (1. 50 francs) to 50, 000 cowries (50 francs). In fact, these are gifts rather than bride price.

Although there is no bride price, properly speaking, the gifts have an important role.

"After the promise of marriage," says Vadier, "the future husband must come every year, after the filikienga /a feast/, to bring a few small gifts to the head of the family and to the girl's mother. These consist as a rule of a little millet, salt, a few hundred cowries, a mat, or two or three crudely made séko /coarse matting/.

"As for the father, he receives no gifts, which does not mean that he does not benefit from those received by his wife or by the head of the family.

"Likewise, the girl receives no gifts. Moreover, she may not utilize the commodities or foodstuffs given to her mother.

"The gifts offered during the long betrothal period cannot be of great value. A prospective husband who should bring 5, 000 or 6, 000

431 cowries to the head of the family would be rejected. The head of the
583 family would certainly not fail to tell him that in promising a girl he intended to give her as a bride and not to sell her. Should the husband insist, he would simply be driven away."

581 Marriage, therefore, is not regarded as purchase among the Mossi,
586 contrary to Malinké and Bambara practices, and in this sense it is imbued among them with greater dignity. Unfortunately, this absence of a bride price permits an easy rupture of the marriage ties, while this is not the case among the Bambara and Malinké where the woman is bound more firmly to her duties. The household, therefore, is less securely grounded among the Mossi than among the Mandé, and thus evil results from good.

581 As a rule, the marriage bond is much looser and more fragile among
583 the Voltaic tribes (Bobo, Gourounsi, Mossi, Habbé/Habe/, etc.) than among the Mandé groups (Bambara, Malinké, etc.), and this is related to the lack of a real bride price. Where there is a bride price, the young girl is sold. If she wishes to leave her husband once she is married, however, considering that a bride price of some importance is difficult to refund (since improvident family heads immediately set out to squander it, while more serious people use it right away to buy a girl for some young man of the family), it has become customary to oppose categorically any demands to break the marriage bond. Thus, while betrothal has greater dignity among the Voltaic tribes, marriage itself has more staying power and more seriousness among the Mandé, and the household has greater soundness. /238/

Now to return to the Mossi.

431 Let us note first that the offering of gifts allows for some flexibility.
583 A rich young man will make much more important gifts than a poor
556 man. He will not give a large sum of cowries, but he may give significant amounts of clothing, foodstuffs (salt, etc.), and animals to the head of his fiancée's family or to her mother. On the other hand, a poor man will give a bundle of firewood which he has just gathered in the bush and a chicken, and this payment will be considered sufficient.

431 Although the girl is not sold, her fiancé or his father are required
583 to make the gifts prescribed by custom.

"The failure to make those gifts prescribed by custom," says Vadier, "has serious consequences. Let us examine the various situations which might arise.

431 583 "I. If by negligence, forgetfulness, or because of an absence (journey), the prospective husband does not make the annual gifts, he will be refused the girl on the day when he comes to have her taken to his home, and he will lose all his rights over her.

"Nevertheless, he will regain all his privileges if in one installment he pays to the head of the girl's family and to her mother all the gifts which he ought to have made during the period of his absence or forgetfulness.

"The head of the family cannot refuse this collective gift and thereby oppose the marriage.

"II. The husband has forgotten to make the gifts and does not come to the home of the family head when the young girl has reached puberty.

"A. If he lives in the area, the failure to call on the head of the family at the required time is regarded as a relinquishment of his rights over the girl. The head of the family may then dispose of her again.

"B. The fiancé has been away on a journey for a long time and is still absent when the girl reaches puberty.

"The head of the family has the fiancé's brother called to him. He offers the girl to him as his bride. The brother is not required to accept, and if he does not, the head of the family recovers all his rights over the girl."

582 Celebration of the marriage. Consummation. —"The girl must have reached puberty (15 or 16 years) in order to be taken to her husband's hut. It is even customary to wait six months or a year after she was first in a state of zim (zim means "blood" in Mossi).

As for the husband, it is equally necessary that he must have attained the age of 17 or 18.

585 The formalities of the marriage ceremony are very simple in Yatenga.

When the betrothed girl has reached puberty, the husband calls on the family head to ask for her. The family head can tell him /239/ to wait six months or a year at most, a delay which the fiancé is required to observe, but usually the head of the family replies that his future wife may be fetched in a few days. The fiancé then hands him 431 273 a bag and two goatskins full of millet and withdraws. This grain is used to make dolo which is drunk by the girl's entire family.

585 431 Each woman living in the same soukala makes a gift of one or two gourds to the girl's mother. The father and the head of the family give her two large baskets. These objects will make up the bride's trousseau.

585 On the appointed day the fiancé sends two men of his family, one of whom is usually his brother, to fetch his bride. These two natives [431] come to the home of the family head with 13 canari /jars/ of dolo. Then the feasting begins.

[782] The father takes his daughter to the hut of the ancestors, cuts the throat of a chicken on the fetish stone so the future marriage will be happy, and discloses to her the name of her husband.

The young fiancée, escorted by two old women of her family and the two emissaries of her fiancé, proceeds to the latter's home.

For four days the young bride will stay in a hut alone with the old women. During this period, the old women give her all the customary advice and show her the course of behavior she must follow to please her future spouse.

The bridegroom comes every day to greet the old women, but during this interview the young girl takes great care to hide her face from him.

On the third day, in the evening, the husband has a sheep and goat slaughtered. He chooses a leg of mutton which he puts aside with the [252] animal's skin, and he has a large quantity of sarabou /millet mush/ cooked along with the remaining meat. He takes the whole thing to the old women. They distribute the sarabou among all the members of the family and carefully put aside the leg of mutton and the skin which they will take on the following day to the girl's mother to show her that her daughter has indeed been delivered to her husband.

Then the husband has his bride brought to his hut where the marriage is consummated.

There is nothing compulsory about this four-day waiting period. It happens frequently that the consummation of the marriage takes place on the day following the young girl's arrival. Occasionally it is delayed for several days when, as sometimes happens, an elderly fiancé gives the bride who was originally intended for him to his son or to some other member of the family.

The marriage is valid from the day of the departure of the old women who brought the girl to her husband's soukala.

The consummation of the marriage is by no means necessary to validate the union. If the husband neglects his new bride for too long, however (a year, for example), she may demand explanations." /240/

582 Impediments to marriage. —"The impediments to marriage," says Vadier, "are as follows.

842 How children are welcomed. —The Mossi are very happy to have children and want by all means to have some. This is indeed to their full advantage, since children work from the age of seven or eight, since they make sacrifices for their parents when the latter are dead, and since the daughters, by marrying, bring in gifts for the family. The more children one has, the happier one is.

842 789 "Under these circumstances," says Vadier, "a barren woman is very poorly regarded by her husband and not greatly esteemed by her neighbors. To overcome this sterility when it occurs, both spouses appeal to the gods. They both go to the tengasoba, the religious chief of the village, with a chicken, a goat, or a sheep, according to their means. The tengasoba cuts the animal's throat on a special stone, collects its blood, and boils it in a vessel along with various tree barks which have certain properties.

"This concoction is then given to the woman, who must mix it with her sarabou. If the spouses later have a child, they must, under threat of calling forth the vengeance of the divinity (the Earth, in [431] this case), offer the tengasoba a gift of 3, 000 cowries if they had a boy or 4, 000 cowries if they had a girl.

"The tengasoba also overcome sterility by cutting the animal's throat in the sacred grove (kango)."

847 Abortions. —Abortions nevertheless occur. Sometimes Mossi women cause an abortion in the event of an illegitimate pregnancy which occurred in the husband's absence. In addition, abortions are rather frequent among unmarried mothers. To conceal their lapse, [791] they appeal to the tipa or timisoba (makers of charms, medicines, and poisons) who give them a special brew of which they hold the secret.

[586] These practices are, of course, very poorly regarded by the Mossi. Married women who resort to them are turned out by their husband's. In addition, if a woman dies as the result of an abortion, her husband is likely to manifest joy and to state that the woman received a just punishment for her transgression. Finally, in former times after the [684] death of the guilty woman, the husband would go to the Moro Naba and denounce her lover to him. The naba confiscated all the lover's property.

843 Childbirth. —Among wealthy Mossi, the pregnant woman is treated with a certain regard. She does not work after the third month /252/ of pregnancy if this is her first, or after the sixth month if she has

843 already borne children. Among the common people, the woman works up to the time of her delivery. Like other Sudanese women, the Mossi woman is inured to the pains of childbirth and devoid of any nervousness.

843 787 When their wives are pregnant, the Mossi often go to consult the baga /sorcerer/ to find out what sacrifices should be made so the event will turn out well. As he is wont to do, the baga indicates such-and-such a sacrifice. He also prognosticates on request whether to expect a boy or a girl.

843 755 If the pregnant woman has been frightened by an evil spirit (kinkirga), she summons the tipa who washes her body with a specially prepared liquid or merely administers violent blows on her head with tarakanré (cowhide sandals of which we spoke earlier /not translated/) to drive out the evil spirit.

844 The Mossi woman may give birth only in her own hut. She would consider it a shameful thing if the child were born in her husband's private hut.

When a woman gives birth, she makes a confession to the old women who assist her, because she fears too much suffering or an unsuccessful delivery if she does not confess the faults she has committed. The old women go and repeat them to the husband, who says, "That's all right, I knew it all," and forgives her. In short, the torments of childbirth are put to use by the old women to procure a confession.

There are midwives among the Mossi (in Mossi, pougourorosa). They are paid by the husband. However, they do not receive a ● [43] salary, properly speaking, but rather a gift (a piece of salt, a skirt cloth, etc.). If nothing is given to them, they cannot and do not make any demands.

In addition to the midwife, the old women of the compound, quarter, or village come and help the patient.

844 576 For the delivery itself, the Mossi woman goes down on hands and knees, her arms stretched out upon the ground, her body slightly inclined from head to hips, in the posture ordinarily used to salute or to remain before a chief. The midwife stays behind her.

844 When the child is born, the women present heat up a very strong concoction with red pepper, soumbara /locust bean/, etc. The woman is made to swallow this, and it is supposed to foster the emission of blood and all other impure matter. Then she is washed with warm water. Her loins are also rubbed vigorously so that the strain undergone in childbirth will not be felt there later. Likewise,

881 304 It seems that among the Mossi and Foulsé, the nané does not give moral lessons to the bankonsé, contrary to the procedure among the Bambara where the custom has been preserved.

At the end of a month, the bankonsé are healed. The families are notified, and each household prepares a new pair of breeches and a boubou /robe/ for the young circumcised boys.

On the evening preceding the day when they make their reappearance in the village, around seven o'clock, the skirts of the circumcised boys are heaped into a pile and burned. The following morning the nané leads the bankonsé to the well to wash from head to toe before donning their new clothes. Before leaving camp, the firewood gathered by the boys is distributed among their mothers and the straw among their family heads. The nané also keeps a certain amount for himself. This is his allowance, aside from his being provided with food throughout the month, along with the circumcised boys, by the latter's [833] relatives. (On the other hand, he had to remain separated from his wife, for there is a superstition that should he approach her, the bankonsé would fail to heal.) When the distribution of straw and firewood has been completed, our circumcised boys make their triumphal entry into the village at seven o'clock in the morning in their /261/ beautiful new garments. To the sound of the tom-tom, they visit all the compounds, calling on everyone. Gifts are offered to them [431] (kola nuts, cowries, peanuts, cotton, dolo, etc.). When the visits are completed, the celebration is over, and the bankonsé return home. [551] They may henceforth be called by name again; this could not be done during their retreat.

Excision. ——Girls are excised when they are eight, nine, or ten, depending on how mature they are. As with the boys, this is done during the month of December, but instead of being carried out on a village or quarter basis, it is done on a compound basis. The operation itself is performed by an old woman who knows how to do it. It is not she, however, who watches over the girls afterwards, but an old woman of the compound who has them under her supervision for twenty-five or thirty days. During that time, the girls are kept apart, sleeping in their guardian's hut and taking care of themselves. As soon as they can walk, they go and gather wood in the bush for her, they fetch water, spin cotton, etc. At nightfall, they sing in chorus, clapping their hands in rhythm.

When they are healed, they deck themselves with all the bracelets and jewelry they can find in the compound. Thus dressed up and

428 Let us finally add some miscellaneous remarks about inheritance.
Concerning the natural child. —"The natural child," says Vadier,
848 "has exactly the same rights as the legitimate child. He inherits from his father or mother concurrently with his brothers and in accordance with the rules we discussed previously." This is correct, but let us not forget that the natural child was sent back to its real father by the legitimate husband as soon as it could leave its mother. Hence, he has all these rights in the household of his actual father and not in that of his mother's husband.

428 Concerning the child in utero. —According to Mossi custom, the child in utero inherits property and is regarded as though it had already left its mother's womb.

Disqualification. —There is cause for disqualification, excluding one from the inheritance. If the deceased was killed, the man who killed him is declared disqualified, but this disqualification does not extend to his children.

Objections to an inheritance. —In cases of ordinary inheritance, if the oldest son is not satisfied with what he received, he may take his grievance to the head of the family who tries to settle the matter. In the event that he does not succeed, the naba intervenes. Such an objection on the part of the eldest son is very unusual. The brothers of the deceased and the other sons cannot object, for only the eldest son has the right to do this.

Wills. —No wills are made, either in theory or in practice. Custom reigns supreme. Sometimes a brother who has some grievance against his brothers decides solemnly before he dies that all his property will go to his sons, but this is a purely platonic manifestation. The dying man is allowed to speak as he pleases, and then, once he is dead and buried, nothing is done about it. One acts in accordance with tradition which asserts itself upon all concerned and overrules, by its own dictates, the special wishes of the deceased.

Acceptance and waiver. —They do not exist here. Custom does not allow people to shirk the exercise of their rights, which are at the same time duties.

428 Restorations. A Mossi is free to dispose of his own property as he
431 sees fit while he is alive, but it is understood that he must give the item before his death for the gift to be effective and acknowledged as such.

428 As a result, an heir may come into his share of the inheritance through a gift received during the lifetime of the deceased.

431 /273/ Gifts inter vivos. —A Mossi may, while alive, give away whatever he pleases of his own property.

Since he is absolute master of these goods and thus entitled to use them as he sees fit, no one has the right to question the gifts he makes.

421 Incidentally, let us recall that heads of families, compounds, work groups, and households are only the managers and not the owners, in the Roman sense, of the family, zaka, work group, or household property, respectively. As for private, individual goods on which the jus utendi et abutendi may be exercised, we know what they amount to among the Mossi. In practice, moreover, the Mossi are far from taking much advantage of this theoretical right. Here, nevertheless, we are concerned with theory, and the following rules pertain to it.

431 A gift made inter vivos must be made before several witnesses in order to be valid.

No special status is required in order to receive a gift.

The wife possesses the same rights as the husband. The gift will [837] nevertheless be worthless if it is proved that the beneficiary is or was her lover.

596 We are now finished with the Mossi family.

To summarize, as we already stated earlier, this family is communal and patriarchal.

Its communalism, however, is quite unstable. People live, not in family groups, but in family subgroups (the zaka). They work, not in family subgroups, but in sub-subgroups (the work groups). In former times, the zaka may have been a community of labor as well as a community of habitation. As we shall see later /not translated/, this is now the case among the Foulsé or Nioniossé /Nyonyose/, where sometimes it is the zaka that constitutes the community of labor and sometimes it is the work group, and where there seems to be an evolution from the former state of affairs to the latter.

As for patriarchy, it is very clearly defined and established. The family revolves around the man and not around the woman. As I have stated, certain signs induce us to believe that the Mossi family, like the Sudanese family in general, was once matriarchal in the very distant past. At all events, this has long ceased to be the case, and we are dealing now with an unstable communalism paired with clearly defined patriarchy.

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643 La, a village near Koudougou district. His eldest wife, the *Pughtiema*,
796 appeared carrying her household utensils in order to accompany her husband. However, all the ministers, led by the Kamsaogho Naba, implored the monarch to have his horse unsaddled and to postpone the trip until the following day. Feigning anger, the Mogho Naba reluctantly agreed to remain in the capital, ordered his horse unsaddled, dismissed his wife, and re-entered the palace.[8]

173 The tradition about the origin of this ritual reveals something of the
643 Mossi attitude toward the human frailties of their rulers. It appears that
796 Poko, the favorite wife of Mogho Naba Waraga (ca. 1660–80), asked permission to visit her father at La, and that he refused to grant her request because of his love and admiration for her. Nevertheless, she continued to ask him for permission, and after her third request he granted her wish and sent a page and a small girl with her as chaperons. When Poko did not return to the palace on the third day, Naba Waraga sent two pages to her father's compound to fetch her, and here they discovered that she had died. Fearing the king's wrath toward persons who brought bad tidings, the pages did not report back to him but notified the ministers of Poko's death. When subsequent messengers also failed to return, the king decided to go to La. The following day, after the morning ceremonies, he ordered his horse saddled and commanded the Pughtiema to get ready to accompany him on his journey. But the ministers, anxious to protect him from grief, told him that a great king never followed a mere woman under any circumstances and persuaded him not to depart. The monarch went back into the palace, and the dignitaries ordered the horse unsaddled and sent it away. Shortly afterwards, the king changed his mind and decided to go to La, but he was beseeched not to do so. He swore that he would leave the following morning, and that if he were prevented from doing so, he would advise all his descendants to try to go to La every morning until one of them succeeded.[9]

643 At the end of this ceremony, a page gave the ministers an ample supply
644 of beer and kola nuts. The Moslems were given presents of kola nuts and
692 millet water (*som kom*) sweetened with honey, since they were forbidden
576 to drink millet beer. Later in the morning, the Mogho Naba left the palace
[431] and entered the zongo, where he greeted his visitors, accepted gifts from visiting chiefs and subjects, dispensed gifts in turn, and presided over the court of justice. Anyone who went to see the ruler had to be accompanied by his provincial minister or his host—regardless of whether it was his purpose to pay a courtesy visit, to pledge allegiance, to plead for aid, or to give
643 testimony in a lawsuit. Pages moved back and forth between the palace
644 and the courtyard, dispensing kola nuts and beer or millet water prepared
576

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The Mogho Naba had an elaborate court composed of many officials, relatives, and servants. The most important courtiers were the five ministers, who appeared daily at court and took part in all important ceremonies in addition to administering their own provinces. Aside from these men, the Mogho Naba had a number of other officials called Naba whose responsibilities covered the full range of duties in the palace and in the capital. One of the most interesting was the Pwe Naba, a royal diviner and court chaperon. His chief duty was to guard the morals of the pages and the royal wives; he also administered the ordeal to persons accused of treason. The pages were required to be chaste until they were discharged from the palace, lest their amorous adventures lead them to compromise the virtue of the royal wives, with whom they were constantly in contact. A wife and a page suspected of adultery were tested by the Pwe Naba. He forced them to look into a mirror or a calabash of water, and declared them guilty or innocent according to the way their faces were reflected. If they were found guilty, the wife was executed and the page was either executed or discharged in disgrace. The Pwe Naba also saw to it that strangers did not address the ruler's wives either on the street or in the market. Offenders were executed.

The Dapore Naba served as the court's chief executioner and as head of a group of the Mogho Naba's hereditary serfs. Members of the royal clan were executed by strangulation, since royal blood could not be shed; all other persons were executed either with a sword, by hanging, or with heavy clubs. Another palace official was the Ouedrango Naba, the head groom. It was he who saddled and presented the king's ceremonial horse to him at the morning ceremony. The Kambo Naba commanded the palace guard; only he and his guards were permitted to carry guns. The Samande Naba and the Samande Nabila supervised the work of the samande-kamba, young men who worked around the palace courtyard and kept watch with heavy batons to enforce order during ceremonies. A lesser palace official was the Zusoaba Kasanga, who, as chief of the palace eunuchs, ruled over the guardians of the royal harem. The Gande Naba made sacrifices for the ruler and also distributed gifts from the king to the royal officials and the royal household.

Another courtier, and one who played an important role during the installation of the new ruler, was the Ouagadougou Naba. As a direct descendant of the Ninisi, he was all but indispensable at sacrifices propitiating or honoring his ancestors. The Bendere Naba was the chief musician and court historian; according to some reports, a Bendere Naba was killed instantly if he made a mistake while reciting the ruler's genealogy. The Raga Naba was chief of the markets in the capital. Under him were

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vincial minister for Djiba, and rendered homage to the sovereign. After this reception the prince went to the Gounga Naba's compound, which henceforth was his headquarters whenever he visited Ouagadougou; for, like other district chiefs, he had to consult with this minister before seeing the monarch. Everyone in the kingdom had to follow the political hierarchy, even the ruler's heir.

The young prince remained at his host's house and from there visited the other important officials, in the order of their rank, receiving from each presents of sheep, millet beer, kola nuts, and sometimes wives. He then visited the Imam of the Ouagadougou Moslem community, where he received a blessing in the name of Allah and was given kola nuts and millet water sweetened with honey. On the fourth or fifth day the prince went to a small village called Zoangha, where he made a sacrifice to his ancestors and requested their protection against all enemies.[29] He returned to Ouagadougou on the same day and was given a palace escort to accompany him to his district.

During his journey, the royal heir had the opportunity to establish or re-establish friendly relations with district chiefs who were now his peers, but who might someday become his subjects. He visited in turn the war leader at Tansobatenga, the Koubri Naba, the Ipelse Naba, and the Kondrin Naba. Each of these chiefs offered him livestock, slaves, and wives. He, in turn, distributed salt (a valuable commodity) to the old women and gave kola nuts and other commodities to the chiefs' head wives. The Baganmini Naba presented the prince with a special quiver of arrows, and the chief of the Fulani at Bedego gave him a pretty maiden and one of his best bulls. The prince spent a few days with each of his hosts, but stayed for seven days in Bere, a district bordering on his own. The Bere Naba gave him a wife, a robe, and a cow, and sent messengers to the village chiefs of Djiba to announce that their chief had arrived in Bere. The chiefs then journeyed to Bere, pledged allegiance to their ruler, and presented gifts to him. On the seventh night there was a ritual (whose main features are unclear), in the course of which the prince entered Djiba secretly on horseback, accompanied only by one servant, one groom, and the nobles and chiefs of Djiba.[30] Most members of the escort who had accompanied him from the capital were left behind at Bere, and followed only when the prince had established himself in his district. When the prince's band entered Djiba under cover of darkness, it was met by the local Ouidi Naba, who ruled the district in the absence of a Crown Prince. The Ouidi Naba now became the prince's protector if the boy were still young, or his most trusted adviser if he were old enough to rule by himself.

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As soon as the prince arrived, the Ouidi Naba made preparations to receive the chiefs of such local districts as Manga, Nobere, and Basgana, who visited the prince and brought him wives, livestock, and money. During a seven-day period, other chiefs and well-wishers visited the new chief and offered him gifts. When this period was over, the new Djiba Naba gave wives to the noble members of his escort and livestock, money, and kola nuts to the commoners and serfs, and sent the group back to Ouagadougou. Then he settled down to the life of a typical district chief, governing his villages in the name of the Mogho Naba, paying him tribute, and settling disputes among his villagers. Dim Delobson reports that the other district chiefs and the heads of such principalities as Boussouma and Conquizitenga formerly sent presents to the Djiba Naba when they sent their annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.[31] But this contradicts all that I heard and saw of the relationship between the royal heir and the other district chiefs. They treated him as an equal and showed no deference to him either in private or on ceremonial occasions. As a matter of fact, in the presence of the Mogho Naba, the royal heir actually effaced himself before the other district chiefs. This behavior served to preserve the concept of equal access of all members of the ruling clan to the ancestral nam. The Mogho Naba was head of the ruling group as well as political leader of the Mossi. His son, on the other hand, was often a junior in terms of age and generation within the ruling group, but politically he was on the same level as the other district chiefs. The sovereign could not show by his behavior that his son was either actually or potentially superior to the other Nanamse; nor could the prince presume to be haughty because of his strategic but accidental relationship to the actual possessor of the nam. Had he tried to do so, he might have ruined his chances of being selected to take over the "house" of his father and his father's fathers.

The relations between the Mogho Naba and his children, including his heir, were characterized by formality—at least in public. Nevertheless, the ruler took a vital interest in the training and welfare of the youthful Djiba Naba. Mogho Naba Wobogo (1890-96) reportedly had the Ouidi Naba and the Baloum Naba of Djiba executed because the Crown Prince died under strange circumstances while under their care. Yet the Mogho Naba was not expected to enjoy seeing his son and heir, because of the Mossi father's traditional anxiety regarding those individuals who would profit most from his death. At the assemblies of district chiefs called by the Mogho Naba, the royal heir was not even greeted by his father; moreover, the heir usually stood at the edge of the assembly and left without attending the customary feast. However, there is considerable evidence that the Mogho

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mal lineage segment except the pretenders to the throne shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. The royal pretenders donned sheepskin mantles to signify that they were willing to "eat the nam." Once the ruler had been buried, the country settled down to an uneasy peace until the eighth day, when the funeral ceremonies took place. In the meantime, the Napoko symbolically held daily court, and the Tansoba's army acted as a check against the attempts of ambitious princes to seize power by force of arms.

Two days before the funeral, the Kamsaogho Naba selected the Kourita, who was to replace the Napoko as the living symbolic representative of the dead Mogho Naba. The person chosen to be Kourita was usually a young son of the deceased king, but since this person was banished from the capital, most of the royal wives hid their young children or fled the palace with them.[33] Once the Kourita had been chosen, the Kamsaogho Naba performed a ceremony (similar to those connected with the divine kings of the Near East) during which the youth was given one of his father's horses, dressed in his father's clothes, and given his father's youngest widow as a wife. He was then paid the homage due the Mogho Naba, and after receiving many gifts from the dignitaries, he was banished from Ouagadougou forever. As he went through the country, he was treated like the Mogho Naba and given many wives and presents. If he should chance to return to Ouagadougou or see the new Mogho Naba, either or both of them would be killed by the ancestors. Many Mossi districts seem to have been founded by exiled Kouritadamba. These men were undoubtedly among the numerous "elder" sons of past kings who are said to have "refused" the nam and gone to live in the districts now governed by their descendants.

The choice and banishment of the Kourita heralded the funeral rites, which were characterized by numerous animal sacrifices to the ancestors in the name of the deceased ruler. On the afternoon of the first day of the funeral, the Crown Prince mounted a horse and left the palace by the women's door. The Napoko then took the bridle of her brother's horse and led him and an immense crowd of cavalry, armed warriors, and musicians around the palace walls three times. After the third round, the Napoko demanded that her brother give her a personal servant as a present; he hesitated, but finally granted her request. The Napoko was then lifted up by the warriors, who shouted as they carried her home. The funeral thus came to an end.

All Mossi potentates tried to emulate the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou in matters of pomp, ceremony, and government.[34] Their courts were inferior to his, but only because they were less powerful and less wealthy.

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hoisted him on their shoulders and proceeded to his host's house with loud acclaim.

The next morning, the new chief went to the palace to pay homage to the Mogho Naba and receive from him the traditional cowries, three kola nuts, and a small jar of millet water. In the days that followed, he celebrated his good fortune at the house of the important ministers and court officials. About a week later he returned to the palace, and the Baloum Naba's chief assistant invested him with the insignia of office: a white gown, a cushion, a pair of slippers, and, most important, a bonnet—the true symbol of chieftainship. Soon afterward, the new chief asked the Mogho Naba and his provincial minister for permission to return home. He was then provided with an escort to accompany him to his district.

The journey of a new chief to his district was marked by pomp and ceremony. The Nobere Naba stopped at such districts as Toudou and Twili, where he was entertained by the chiefs and presented with wives and other gifts. Some districts he would never be allowed to visit again, and others he had to bypass during his joyful journey. The reasons for these restrictions and prohibitions have long since been forgotten, but they were probably instituted to prevent conflicts among Kombemba and to prevent the new chief from coming into contact with the descendants of the Kouritadamba of former Mogho Nanamse.

As the new Nobere Naba neared his district, he was met by a welcoming committee of village chiefs, nobles, and commoners, who pledged allegiance to him and gave him wives, goods, clothing, money, grain, and livestock. He was then taken to the Soulougre Naba, a descendant of the aboriginal Ninisi, at whose hands he had to undergo another series of rites before he could set up his new compound and begin his rule. These ceremonies were rather simple in comparison with those at Ouagadougou, but they represented a ritual re-enactment of the Mossi conquest of the district, and reinforced the status relationship between the Mossi and the aboriginal population. At the end of seven days, the Kombere Naba gave the Soulougre Naba a black cow to be sacrificed at a pool called Yarega, a shrine of the ancient Ninisi on a tributary of the White Volta River. When this final rite was over, an enthusiastic crowd fetched the chief, and the young people of Soulougre village bore him aloft to his compound. A period of celebration now began during which all the heads of villages, lineages, and compounds paid homage and swore allegiance to their ruler. This ended when the chief summoned his escort from Ouagadougou and gave presents to those who wished to return there and wives and land to those who wished to settle in his district.

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greater number of lineage members eligible for the nam and the shallow genealogical depth. Every man who had the ability or desire to rule was encouraged to seek the post. Many candidates tried to impress the district chief and his advisers with their good qualities; most tried to bribe them. Since the candidates could not openly seek the post during the day, they visited the important officials of the district at night, taking money and cattle as presents. Some candidates even promised wives. The intrigues on this level, such as seeking the friendship of pages to find out about the activities of rivals, paralleled those at Ouagadougou. The more gifts a candidate gave the district chief, the more his rivals tried to surpass him. Consequently, the district chief often kept the office vacant for months or even as long as two or three years in order to enjoy these lucrative gifts. Neither the caretakers of the village, who complained about the administrative problems of a village without a chief, nor the Tengsobadamba, who declared that without the permission of a chief they could not make sacrifices to help the people avoid illness, drought, and sterility, could force the Kombere Naba to name a new village chief. Only when the candidates had exhausted most of their wealth was the process to elect the chief set in motion.

The district chief had a better knowledge of the character of candidates for the village chieftainship than the Dimdamba or Mogho Nanamse had about the men whom they selected. The district chiefs were better able than other Mossi rulers to obey the dictum that only those men capable of "keeping" the country should rule. Nevertheless, before making a choice, the Kombere Naba called in the local minister responsible for the village in question and discussed with him the character and capabilities of the various candidates.[42] As on higher levels, the eldest son of the former chief was usually favored, especially if he had sent a large *fado* (death tax) to the district chief and had been generous to him during the interregnum. But it was also possible that one of the dead chief's younger sons or one of his brothers or uncles might be chosen. In some cases, the district chiefs chose men from related sub-lineages that had not held the nam for generations. One district chief chose a man who had lived away from the village for thirty years. He had gone to live in his mother's brother's village as a young man and did not return until he was named chief. Admittedly, such cases were exceptional, but they kept alive in the minds of the local people the concept of the Mossi lineage's corporate possession of the nam.

On the day chosen for the election of a village chief, all the candidates with their unshaved heads and sheepskin mantles reported to the village administrator's house along with all the other men of their lineage. They gave him presents, and he led them to the compound of the district chief.

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631 651 643 114 [648] [669] because of this delinquency, the Mogho Naba might hesitate to come to the aid of any of his vassals if a general war broke out. It is true that the Mogho Naba did not aid the Yatenga ruler when the French arrived. But whether this was because of his failure to pay taxes, or because the French conquest of the Yatenga coincided with a civil war there, we shall probably never know. We do know that many of the Mogho Naba's vassals came to his aid when the French finally arrived at Ouagadougou. It is my opinion that the gifts exchanged between Yatenga and Ouagadougou were not "tributary," but were more in the nature of tokens of friendship between two peers.

643 645 692 651 [431] The Mogho Naba and his provincial ministers also received revenue as a function of their judicial roles. The nature and disposition of the fines levied against legal offenders were discussed in Chapter V. The Mogho Naba's fees came in the form of the traditional gifts the litigants gave him even before their cases were tried. These gifts were never regarded as bribes, for this would have contradicted the Mossi axiom that "the truth is at Ouagadougou."

643 651 634 768 [428] The Mogho Naba inherited all the property of the Kamsaogho Naba, and claimed all the property of district chiefs who died without close relatives. He also received inheritance taxes (fado) from the estates of deceased district chiefs. In collecting the fado, the Mogho Naba first retained the horse on which the messenger came to announce the chief's death. He reciprocated by sending envoys with cowries and animals to be offered to their common ancestors at the chief's funeral. After the funeral, the envoys claimed the dead chief's quiver of arrows to take to Ouagadougou for deposit with those of other dead chiefs. Then they demanded the fado, and jestingly told the heirs that the Mogho Naba would be satisfied with nothing less than "a thousand of everything" (*tusri bumbu fa*) the deceased had possessed: wives, slaves, horses, cows, goats, chickens, articles of clothing, and so on. The heirs pleaded poverty and jokingly gave the envoys a few old and sickly animals, old chickens, tattered pieces of clothing, etc. Eventually, they handed out the fado, which usually consisted of livestock, clothing, food, weapons, jewelry, cowries, and even slaves. Lastly, they gave the envoys the chief's ceremonial horse and presents for themselves.

643 645 651 439 [487] The Mogho Naba and his ministers collected a considerable amount of revenue from the traders who visited Ouagadougou and the larger market towns and village markets throughout the kingdom.[8] The Mossi (especially the assimilated Yarse) were good traders, and they benefited from their country's strategic location between the Sahara and the forest regions. According to Barth, some six caravan routes crossed the country, linking

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439 Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade in 1904 and 1905, estimates that about 16,000 head of cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the two customs posts in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believes that since "the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one may assume a minimum annual export of 20,000 head of cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. [174] The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons."[11] It is clear that this volume of trade could not have been achieved so soon after the French conquest. [651] We can only conclude that it existed prior to the coming of the Europeans, and that it brought the Mossi rulers a considerable income.

643 651 439 [431] The Mogho Naba's officials collected taxes from all caravans that passed through his capital. The caravaneers also gave the Mogho Naba important gifts, and he apparently traded with them, even if always to his own profit. Binger states that Mogho Naba Sanum forced horse traders from the Yatenga and Hausa merchants to sell him part of their commodities at one-hundredth the purchase price.[12] Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo

> appears to have had some business relations with white merchants who came to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reason to be pleased with their integrity, and that the silver they sent him contained plenty of copper. Some traders apparently came as far as Ouagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them there during my stay. I was told that he was an important *marabout*, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Ouagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi.[13]

439 651 634 All the caravans that passed through Mossi country were obliged to stop and give presents to the district officials. Those caravaneers who tried to elude taxation by going through the forest ran the risk of being attacked by local nobles, who usually confiscated their goods.

649 651 443 The Mogho Naba and the lesser chiefs had "market officials" who taxed the merchants in the markets of their territories. The officials at Ouagadougou, the Kos Naba ("sales chief") and the Raga Naba ("market chief"), were fairly rigorous in their exactions. The Kos Naba collected taxes in cowries for every cow slaughtered at the market, and also took its hump and gave it to the Nemdo Naba ("meat chief") for distribution in the royal household. He also collected taxes on every cow sold in the market, but

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did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this, he occasionally took one or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys sold in the market were taxed at the rate of 200 cowries each. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were.

The Raga Naba collected taxes on the other commodities sold at the market. Cotton weavers paid him according to the size of their bolts of cloth, and cotton growers paid taxes on the sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed amounts, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- and ox-load of salt entering the market place was taxed. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the Mogho Naba's wives with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spear points, and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on the cereals, vegetables, and cooked food sold at the market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabashes of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the Mogho Naba's young grooms, who were not normally fed by the palace household. The beer sellers were not formally taxed, but they contributed a substantial percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel, who demanded the customary *lembgha* ("taste before buying") more frequently and freely than ordinary buyers.

There is some evidence (mainly from European travelers) that the traders occasionally found the caravan and market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that the high taxes exacted by the Mogho Naba were "one of the reasons why Ouagadougou placed second [as a market town] and Mane was the commercial capital of Mossi country." Binger himself was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "On market day [at Ouagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring everything to the palace, whether it be millet, hoes, or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the discretion of the donors.*"[14] The italics are Binger's.

Some of the later Mogho Nanamse appear to have obtained a great deal of revenue through the sale of slaves. Most of these slaves were captured in raids among the smaller groups surrounding Mossi territory, such as the Samo, Gurunsi, and Busansi populations. According to Mangin, Gurunsi and Busansi countries were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.[15] In early times the Mossi chiefs utilized these slaves (*yemse*, sing. *yamba*) as agricultural workers, until Mogho

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dreds of persons lived in Ouidin, the ward of the Ouidi Naba. Some of them were related to him; others had been attracted by his wealth and by his ability to obtain wives for his charges. All of them benefited from being attached to him in one way or another, and in return helped him to augment his income.

All the district chiefs sent women to their provincial ministers to be kept as wives (and thus as agricultural workers), or to be given out as pughsiudse. The Kamsaogho Naba received more pughsiudse than the other ministers because he was in charge of the wealthier districts, and also of course distributed more. The Baloum Naba was especially favored in another respect. Each year, he was entitled to call several *seghse* (sing. *seka*; a corvée or convocation) of his former pages and their relatives to help cultivate his fields. The Ouidi Naba's sources of revenue were about the same as the Baloum Naba's. In addition, his position as chief minister enabled him to obtain numerous gifts from persons who visited Ouagadougou. Moreover, the Mogho Naba often gave him horses from the fado of deceased district chiefs. The Larhalle Naba had full ministerial privileges, and a few other means of obtaining revenue. He was allowed, for instance, to keep the animals that had not been sacrificed on the graves of deceased rulers.

The provincial ministers received many goods and services from the district chiefs of their provinces. Whenever one of these ministers sent a messenger to the district, the chief gave the messenger money and livestock for his master. Furthermore, the district chiefs brought presents for their minister when they paid their annual visit to Ouagadougou to render homage to the Mogho Naba. The provincial ministers used their position as confidants and advisers to obtain as many presents as possible from persons who came to Ouagadougou to ask special favors from the Mogho Naba, to participate in judicial proceedings, or to seek the nam. Moreover, they cooperated with each other in these exactions, so that a person seeking a favor from or through one minister was prudently advised to give presents to or to seek the aid of the others.

The district chief played a key role in the procurement of revenue for the central administration, and derived an income for himself in the process. The seignorial rights over the Mossi people delegated by the Mogho Naba to all nam holders were quite obvious on this level. The district chief had rights to all valuable fruit trees, such as locust-bean and shea-butter, that grew within the boundaries of his territory. He instructed the village chiefs to harvest the fruit of these trees and send it to him. The village chiefs even had to send him the wood from the fallen branches of these trees.

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creased his force" and ultimately added to his income. Men who had been compelled to flee from other districts because of crimes or power struggles were granted refuge and given pughsiudse. In this manner, the district chief, like the Mogho Naba, established seignorial rights over his new subjects, incorporated them into the district, and obtained goods and services from them. The better a district chief's reputation, the greater the number of refugees who sought shelter with him and added to his wealth. Conversely, a chief who was known for his injustice, his rascality, and his excessive demands from persons seeking the village nam was shunned by potential subjects and might even be deserted by his own.

Those persons who visited the district chief's compound to settle court cases also contributed to his revenue. When the case dealt with cattle or other livestock, the chief received a few animals. In other cases, he received only the customary gifts from the litigants. He also received gifts from all the families in his district several times a year. One occasion was the "Tense," a festival in honor of the mother of Mogho Naba Oubri, the founder of the Ouagadougou dynasty; the other was the Basgha. During these two ceremonies every village chief, preceded by his district administrator and followed by his subjects, paid homage to the district chief and gave him presents. The district chief retained part of what he received for the upkeep of his household and to fulfill such obligations as hospitality to travelers, and added the remainder to his own annual tribute to the Mogho Naba.

The manner in which the district chief collected his annual tax or tribute for the Mogho Naba is the subject of controversy. Several of my respondents declared that the collection of this tribute was rather informal. The district chief allegedly notified the village chiefs that he wished to give a present to the Mogho Naba, and these chiefs sent word to the family heads, who, in turn, notified every household. The village people then collected chickens and livestock, baskets of grain, and cowries, and sent them up through the hierarchy to the district chief. The district chief's retainers checked the gifts from each village very carefully, and if some villages gave less than was expected of them, the district chief summoned their chiefs for explanations. In most cases the district chief knew exactly how much could be expected of his subjects, because his informers—usually his own pages and courtyard servants, or messengers of the local administrators—kept him informed of the wealth of each hamlet. Usually, a village chief who had withheld too much from the commodities turned over to him, or who had not demanded sufficient goods from his villagers, sought to make amends. It was in his interest to do so, since it was always dangerous to incur the

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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us:

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[25]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters. 634 574

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands. 651 622 634 [361] [431]

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well. [464] [566] [567]

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head [476] [431] [692]

did not derive any revenue from his judicial functions. He could not levy a fine against any malefactor. However, his intermediary position between the villagers and the district chief did permit him to obtain some revenue whenever commodities moved from one level to the other.

The officials who administered the villages for the district chief received part of their revenue from the villages under their charge. These local administrators had no courts or retainers comparable to those at the provincial level. However, they did have a large number of wives who contributed valuable agricultural labor.[1] These administrators were permitted to ask the village chiefs for sosose on their own fields several times during the planting season, but—unlike the district chiefs—they were not permitted to have the villagers cultivate special fields for them. In return for any help received, they had to provide food and drink for the workers.

The administrator received most of his revenue as a by-product of active duty in the villages. When he visited a village or transmitted a message to a village chief, he almost invariably received a sheep, a goat, a chicken, or some millet, from the village chief. He also acquired large quantities of goods during the village interregnum: he received gifts from the chief's heirs during the chief's funeral; he received additional presents when they took the fado to the district chief; he could prolong the interregnum in order to receive as many bribes as possible from contenders for the nam; and he was handsomely rewarded when the candidate he had backed was finally installed in office.

The extended family was the basic socio-economic unit supporting the Mossi political organization. The Yirisoba received land rights in his saka from his Sakakasma, who had obtained his rights from the village chief. An extended family in need of additional land would seek help from its Sakakasma or its Boodkasma. When the family no longer needed this land, it reverted to the lineage. If all the land granted to the lineage was already occupied, the extended family, through its lineage head, asked the village chief for more land. The chief usually granted this request, unless he had no more weogho available. In this case, the needy Yirisoba sometimes tried to borrow land from his non-kin neighbors. Such a step was not undertaken lightly, however. If a man borrowed land from his own lineage members or from the chief, the land rights reverted to its donors without difficulty. However, if he borrowed land from another lineage and either he or his benefactor died without assuring the return of the land, litigation often ensued. In some cases a man would seek land from his lineage brothers in another village, who let him use some of their land with their chief's permission. Some Yirisobadamba even asked their district chief for

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permission to use weogho in the district, and new hamlets arose in this way. A Yirisoba who could not obtain adequate land on which to grow food for his family left the district and sought land elsewhere, especially among his mother's patrilineage. However, village and district chiefs always tried to prevent this because they did not like to lose any of their subjects.

As director of economic activities in the household, the Yirisoba supervised the agricultural labor of his charges. It was he who directed the work of his wives, his sons, and his sons' wives, and supervised the care of the family herd. He provided the cotton, which was carded and spun by the women and woven by the men. It was also his task to ensure adequate clothing for the members of his household; and he sold excess commodities in order to buy salt, kola nuts, bracelets, foreign clothes, and other products imported from the forest and desert zones. In each case, the Yirisoba had to balance judiciously the requirements of his household against his obligations to the community and to the political hierarchy. He had to prevent economic rivalry among his sons, and especially among his sons' wives. He had to make sure that every married member of the household had sufficient time to provide goods and services for his own family, and that foodstuffs were distributed equitably among the wives. Finally, he had to use the resources of the household to build and maintain the nexus of socio-economic relationships that provided wives for the male members of the household, and to meet his obligations to the political hierarchy.

The Yirisoba also had social and economic responsibilities toward the other members of his babissi and boodoo. He furnished labor and goods to needy lineage members and to non-relatives with whom he had marriage arrangements. Since much of this help was given on the basis of ultimate reciprocity, very little loss was involved. However, the relationship between commoner and noble families was quite different. In theory, the nobles had no claims on the property of the commoners; but in practice, they did claim such rights. Furthermore, commoner lineages often gave the nobles many more wives than the nobles returned. This inequality enabled the nobles to receive more goods and services from their marriage partners among the commoners than they gave in return. The nobles thus took advantage of their power as possessors of the nam, but even membership in the royal lineage did not exempt them from supporting the governmental services at all levels. This duty was incumbent upon every Moaga.

The Mossi people could not refuse to support their political organization, but often complained about having to do so. Many Mossi felt that their rulers were greedy and avaricious and received too many gifts. Some Mossi held that if the chiefs were not placated with goods and services,

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they might take the lives and property of their subjects. There are many stories of avaricious chiefs who convicted wealthy commoners of spurious crimes and had them executed or banished in order to seize their wealth. There are also stories of twin tricksters, Raogo, a boy, and Poko, a girl, two *enfants terribles* who always succeeded in outwitting and killing avaricious chiefs. When I asked a district chief to explain the significance of the Raogo and Poko tales, he replied that they were "meaningless stories told by children who do not understand how difficult it is for a chief to command and protect men." This remark prompted one of his officials to add that in olden days, people gladly supported the Mogho Naba and his chiefs in order to be safe from their enemies—a statement which might have been made by a conscientious government official anywhere. However, whether commoners or chiefs, all Mossi believed that men must have government, and that without it chaos would prevail.

The Mossi political organization was subject to severe strains. For one thing, its economic basis was not very strong. True, goods and services were channeled to the capital from the smallest areas, and in time this permitted the establishment of increasingly complex governmental structures. Nevertheless, the Mossi fiscal system was not highly developed, and much of the revenue the rulers received came to them in the form of legal fees and gifts. Moreover, most of these revenues were irregular in nature.

Despite this fact, the Mossi believed that their rulers were wealthy—and there can be no doubt that they were wealthier than their subjects. Nevertheless, visiting Europeans found little difference between the standard of living of the chiefs and that of the people. Binger would have us believe that Mogho Naba Sanum bragged so much about imaginary wealth, including 10,000 horses, that he "managed to convince himself of it."[36] Binger's subsequent remarks about Sanum's resources are illuminating even if somewhat biased, because they throw light on the economic basis of the Ouagadougou kingdom. He tells us that Sanum's revenues were

> not well regulated. He lives on gifts and offerings which people have brought him with the aim of obtaining justice, or to demand something from him. He sometimes sends a band of men to capture slaves in Kipirsi country, or at least supports such ventures. But these revenues, like those of all the black chiefs, are not sufficient, because these men are prone to squander their resources. As a result, these sovereigns are compelled to use expedients in order to procure horses and other commodities. Thus, like the rulers of Tieba, Pegue, and Kong, Naba Sanum still has captives in villages devoted to agriculture, but he does not take proper care of these villages. If he does not receive enough millet in the form of gifts, he must sell his slaves in order to procure it.[37]

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went to the home of his Samande Naba, the next to the Gounghin ward, then to Baghin, and subsequently to the homes of other officials. He could not remain long at one place for fear that the ancestors might find him. Every morning, however, when the cock's crow heralded the ancestors' departure, he returned to his palace.

The principal part of the Basgha ceremony was performed on the night when the crescent moon appeared. On that night more than any other, the ruler had to seek refuge elsewhere, because the ancestors visited the palace to accept the sacrifices offered to them by the Pughtiema with the help of the Baloum Naba and the chief eunuch of the harem. The exact nature of this ceremony is unknown, but it is known that the Baloum Naba used the sacred namtibo along with animals and millet-flour water provided by the Pughtiema and the chief eunuch for propitiatory sacrifices to the ancestors. The aim of these sacrifices was to induce the ancestors to grant good crops, health, happiness, and children to their descendants, and to "increase the force of the namtibo."[1] At cock's crow the Bendere Naba sprinkled a flour infusion called *gningmassem* ("water of health") on the palace courtyard so that the ruler might walk upon it when he returned. The Mogho Naba was greeted with drumbeats and escorted to the palace gate. His entry into the antechamber marked the close of this ceremony, and the people retired until later in the day.

The elaborate public ceremony of the Basgha took place in mid-morning. The ministers and important officials, clad in ceremonial garb, arrived at the palace quite early. When the Mogho Naba appeared, the Bendere Naba recited the official genealogy, starting with Ouedraogo and Oubri and ending with elaborate praises of the current ruler. The ministers and their entourage then saluted the Mogho Naba and wished him *Ne tarbo*, which means a happy and prosperous new year for himself and the country. He, in turn, took advantage of this occasion to give many presents to his retinue, and his wives distributed huge amounts of food and drink to the assembly until everyone was satiated. Then all the officials except the Bendere Naba and his group paid homage to the Mogho Naba and departed. The musicians remained at court most of the day, beating their drums and singing praises to their sovereign and his illustrious ancestors. The royal pages kept them well supplied with food and beer, and now and again during the day the ruler sent them gifts among which robes were often included. Whenever the drummers received a gift, they slipped into a rhythmic pattern that signified: *Tompaongo, Wend'kaouss' Naba niore, Wenne wilig vinre*, or, "We bow in thanksgiving for your gift. May God give the ruler long life. May God grant us to be alive next year so that we may do this again." The

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climax of this gift-giving came when the ruler sent the Bendere Naba about 19,000 cowries and a slave.[8] This ceremony terminated at nightfall.

The close of the Mogho Naba's Basgha heralded the start of similar ceremonies throughout his kingdom. The heads of the other Mossi kingdoms and the Dimdamba were free to hold their own Basgha when they wished; but the Ouagadougou ruler's own subjects, including the provincial ministers, district chiefs, village chiefs, and lineage heads, apparently were not. One reason for this, aside from respect for the ruler, was that the important officials' head wives had to wait for the yeast (*dabili*) from the Mogho Naba's beer before they could prepare the sacrificial offerings for their husbands' ancestors. This dabili went from district to district or to several districts at once, depending on whether the chiefs celebrated Basgha at the same time or successively. Thus, the dabili from the capital united all the wives of the royal clan, and made for both a ritual continuity in the veneration of all ancestors and a strengthening of religious and political bonds.

The Basgha ceremonies on the district level were much less elaborate than those held at Ouagadougou, but just as important. The district chief, too, had his buildings repaired and his grain distributed for sacrifices for the ancestors. A few days before the actual ceremony, he ordered the Gande Naba to pour millet water on the graves of recently deceased chiefs and to sacrifice chickens there. As in Ouagadougou, these sacrifices were offered to induce the chiefly ancestors to grant the villagers health, food, and children. Unlike the Mogho Naba, most district chiefs did not ritually hide from their ancestors for several nights prior to the ceremony. Some of them did change their sleeping place within the compound every night, and the court people always slept indoors during this period. On the night of the Basgha itself, however, the district chiefs did not sleep in their compounds.

As in Ouagadougou, the Pughtiema performed the main ceremony by pouring millet water as a libation to the ancestors who visited her hut. She was assisted by the Baloum Naba, who had possession of the namtibo. Apparently, the district chief remained in hiding and took no part in the ceremony. But he was the main figure in the morning ceremony, which differed little from that of Ouagadougou. In some districts the Tengsoba performed a public sacrifice to the ancestors. He was given the namtibo—sacred objects that had belonged to former district chiefs—and poured libations and sacrificed chickens to all of the chief's ancestors. He also prayed both to these ancestors and to his own on the chief's behalf, and beseeched them to grant long life and happiness to the district population. He also declared that the sacred objects would seek out and kill any enemies of the local ruler, wherever they might be. Once this ritual had been com-

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provided the sacrificial animals for the royal tombs in the area of the capital, and the Ouagadougou Naba, as chief Tengsoba, performed the sacrifices. The Larhalle Naba also dispatched his servants to the distant districts where royal tombs were located, with orders to obtain (by force, if necessary) the animals for the sacrifices from the local populations and give them to the special guardians of the tombs. Sacrifices were made on the grave of Naba Oubri at Koudougou and on that of his father, Zoungourana, in the village of Zomtoega in Tenkodogo. However, there is no indication that a sacrifice was made on the grave of Ouedraogo, who is believed to have died in Sagabatenga but whose burial place is unknown. Nor is it clear whether, as some Mossi claim, annual sacrifices were made on the alleged grave of Nyennega in Gambaga. As soon as these preparatory sacrifices had been completed and the Mogho Naba had been notified, preparations were made for the celebration.

The Mogho Naba met with the Larhalle Naba, and the date of the Tense was set for twenty-one days after the meeting. On the following day, the Larhalle Naba made five cords out of tree bark and tied nineteen knots in each of them. The next day, he gave each provincial minister a cord to send to the districts in his province. The provincial ministers then sent their messengers with the cords to the districts, with orders to untie one knot every day the cords were in transit. Thus a district chief, counting the number of knots in the cord on the day it reached him, knew how many days were left before the Tense. As soon as the entire kingdom had been notified of the festival, the envoys returned to Ouagadougou and returned the cords to their ministers.

On the Friday morning before the Tense, the Larhalle Naba went to the palace. Kneeling before the monarch, he untied the last knot on each cord to indicate that the ceremony would begin on the morrow. To acknowledge this fact, the Mogho Naba distributed bars of salt to his courtiers and visitors instead of the customary kola nuts, beer, and millet water. Visitors left the court early in order to provide their families with foodstuffs for the celebration.

Early on Saturday morning, royal servants brought huge quantities of beef and mutton that had been cooked without pepper (this spice being disliked by the ancestors) and other foods, and deposited them in large heaps in the courtyard. Nearby, they also placed numerous large pots of millet beer. As soon as the morning ceremony was over, the Larhalle Naba slowly approached the Mogho Naba, who presented him with a new white robe. The minister donned the robe and walked to the piles of food, from which he took three portions of millet mush, dipped them in a specially

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gift every year to the Imam and to Karamakho Isa, for whom he has great veneration. These are old and wise men who cannot but give him excellent counsel.[18]

The relations between Boukary Koutou and the Moslems of the Sakhaboutenga district show how Mossi chiefs, though pagans, were able to establish viable political bonds with potentially hostile believers of another religion. Boukary Koutou was probably a Moslem "in outward appearance only," as Binger suggests. Nevertheless, it was by being Moslems of this kind that Mossi rulers managed to retain the allegiance of their Moslem subjects. This was their duty as "fathers of their people," and apparently they did it without much hesitation. In this manner, they effectively used religion to bolster their power and sustain their authority.

Ritual connections between the Mossi rulers and the chiefs of surrounding countries enabled them to protect their subjects from foreign attack and to maintain internal cohesion. The numerous reciprocal gifts between the Mossi and such other Voltaic groups as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, and Gurmanche were based on the belief in descent from a common ancestor or ancestress. Ritual and the supernatural thus played an extremely important role in the cohesiveness of the Mossi kingdoms and in the functioning of their governmental processes. Without these ritual factors, it is doubtful whether the Mossi rulers would have been able to maintain such a relatively high degree of control over their subjects, given the relative weakness of their economic resources, communications, and armed forces. In trying to understand why the Mossi retained their autonomy for so long, one must take into consideration the statement made by a French officer a year after the Mossi were conquered: "We must not lose sight of the fact that [the Mossi] have always presented a common front to strangers, and that a single word of command is sufficient to unite them against the invader in the name of kinship and national unity."[19]

The phase of Mossi political history that began when Nyennega left Dagomba and moved northward came to an end with the European conquest. Most French scholars believe that the Mossi were in a state of decadence at the time of conquest and might have fallen to such African conquerors as El Hadj Omar, Samory Touré, or Baba To. The fact remains, however, that these conquerors all skirted Mossi country without entering it. If these African rulers believed that the Mossi were invincible in their unity, it was because the Mossi, through mythical bonds of common descent and actual bonds of kinship, had welded themselves into a cohesive and powerful group.

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15. *Ibid.*, p. 673.
16. Delafosse, II, 128–29.
17. Binger, II, 502.
18. Crozat, p. 4849.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 4822.

20. The structure of the Mossi kingdoms and their relationship with the autonomous principalities make it difficult to determine the exact number of districts within each unit. For example, the Mossi people always claimed that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou was sovereign over "333" chiefs (cf. Binger, I, 502). However, since the Mossi always associate the number 3 with males, any number giving a multiple of threes is suspect. Binger stated that some of the chiefs referred to as part of the 333 were no more than village chiefs. However, Tauxier (*Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 567), describing the kingdom of Ouagadougou, states, "At the top of this hierarchy is the king, the Mogho Naba, paramount chief of the Mossi, residing at Ouagadougou. To give at least an idea of the relative importance of this empire, without going further than, say, the cercle of Ouagadougou, there were eight provinces comprising 300 *cantons* [districts], 5,000 villages or small towns, and 861,700 inhabitants."

While voicing the myth that the Mogho Naba had "under his control 333 chiefs or Nabas," Dim Delobson actually gives only about 150 chiefs in his list of district and other chiefs (pp. 46, 288–97). It was impossible for me to get any idea of the number of chiefs, because the Mossi hierarchy has changed radically since 1905.

21. Dim Delobson, p. 63.
22. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 651.
23. The Mossi did not acknowledge the defeat of Mogho Naba Wobogo by the French until the Ouidi Naba surrendered to the invaders and installed a ruler they had chosen.
24. Archives, Document 1G-334. Lambert describes Karfo as "a curious figure who unfortunately is not well known."
25. Binger, I, 465.
26. Dim Delobson, pp. 15–45, *passim*.
27. It appears that the monarchs found fault with their district chiefs most readily when they had sons or other relatives in need of districts to govern. Since a possessor of the nam could not be deprived of it while alive, he had to be accused of some crime and executed. Koabga was replaced as Doulougou Naba by Lassanne Congo (called Naba Kouliga), a son of the Mogho Naba. On the other hand, when Naba Pusha of Nobere district fled rather than commit suicide or start a civil war, he was replaced by his own brother, who became Naba Soulougou.
28. Dim Delobson, p. 44.
29. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 655.

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Mangin, p. 25.
2. Mangin does not discuss rape, but reported that an "abductor" was beaten and put in irons. The girl was returned to her family, and if she gave birth to a child, it was killed (pp. 26–27).
3. Dim Delobson, p. 55.
4. Most of my informants state quite clearly that the district chiefs did not have the right to impose the death penalty, but could do so if they were discreet about it and did not take advantage of their subjects. But Dim Delobson states: "Contrary to what people generally believe, the Kombere—the chief of the *canton* [district]—also had the power of life and death over his subjects. How many persons have been put to death only because they were wealthy? How many village chiefs have been killed by the district chiefs in their territories without the Mogho Naba's intervention?" (pp. 55–56).
5. Dim Delobson (p. 56) insists that justice was free of charge, but added that

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plaintiffs gave the chiefs the traditional presents of a white cock and a sack containing from 200 to 1,000 cowries.

6. Mangin declares: "Most of the troubles which arise between one Mossi and another derive from their wives and from their debts; yet it may not be said, as a general rule, that women are unhappy or ill treated" (p. 39; see also p. 33). But cf. Dim Delobson, pp. 182, 185.

7. Mangin states that in Koupela a recidivous thief was "led to the market place with a rope around his neck; he was supplied with an abundance of meat and beer, and then clubbed to death at the foot of a tree" (p. 25). I doubt whether this practice was very widespread, because the Mossi were afraid to anger the market Tengkouga (earth spirits) by spilling blood in the market place.

8. Cf. Ruelle, pp. 679 ff.

9. Binger, I, 462.

10. But cf. Marc, p. 134.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Sa'di, pp. 45–46. The date of this battle and the location of Benka are unknown. However, Delafosse (II, 141) believes that it was located in the Massina region on the shores of Lake Debo.

2. Sa'di, pp. 112–13.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 114–15.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 121–23. The chronicle also states (p. 168) that these Mossi captives were installed in a special ward of Askia's capital, a practice apparently followed by all victorious Sudanese groups including the Mossi.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

6. See Delafosse, II, 143–45, and Tauxier, *Le Noir du Yatenga*, pp. 88–91.

7. Crozat, p. 4822.

8. Binger, I, 502.

9. Almamy Samory Touré was the last empire-builder in the western Sudan. He was defeated by the French in 1898 and exiled to Gabon, where he died in 1900. See Binger, I, 84ff.

10. Crozat, p. 4837.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 4849.

12. Archives, Document 1G-315 (1903–1904).

13. Crozat, p. 4849.

14. Tauxier, *Le Noir du Soudan*, p. 463.

15. Mangin, p. 13.

16. Cheron, "Contribution," pp. 655, 675–76.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 673.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 676.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 654.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 685–86.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 674.

22. Ruelle, p. 686.

23. Mangin, p. 62.

24. Binger, I, 473.

25. Cheron, "Contribution," p. 660.

26. Crozat, p. 4849.

27. Mangin, p. 12.

28. For example, when Mogho Naba Sanum's army attacked Boussouma, it made "such a rapid retreat" that Ligidi, the Boussouma Dim, could only counterattack the army's rear guard (Cheron, "Contribution," p. 676).

29. Archives, Document 15G-190 (1897–98).

30. Mangin, p. 12.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Dim Delobson, p. 21.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

34. Cf. Southall (pp. 246–60) for a discussion of the "segmentary" state in Africa.

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837 man even refrains from making overtures to a woman whose husband's female relatives may be married to a member of his own lineage. He fears that a wronged husband may have the wives of his lineage brothers recalled, thus causing dissension within and between the two lineages. If none of these complications are present, a man seeks out a person who knows the woman and sends a message declaring his intentions. If the response is favorable, the man then buys four large kola-nuts (four being the number for a woman), wraps them together with 44 francs, and send them to his lady. This procedure may be followed on subsequent market days without the two parties ever coming into direct contact with each other. Finally, however, a rendezvous is arranged, and on the pretense of leaving the market to visit a relative for several days, the woman goes instead to her lover's village.

837 These casual affairs started at the market sometimes become quite 586 serious, and if for any reason they are sanctioned by the relatives of either the man or the woman, they often lead to the breakup of a marriage. And since the market is the place where disputants of any sort most likely come into contact, it is here that fights over "stolen" wives break out.

837 This pattern of extramarial relationships centering around the 443 market place is so common among the Mossi that the younger men, and even some of the older ones, are disappointed with the "market" when their mistresses do not appear. Mossi men who sit under the shelters around the market place can usually give an inquirer not only the name of a woman, the name and village of her husband and father, but also the name and village of her paramour. Characteristically enough, they are always "ignorant" of the escapades of their own female relatives or of the wives of their lineage members. The only 593 time when men act as though their relatives might be involved in 443 extramarital affairs is when for some purpose or another a man has to recall a wife or daughter who has gone to visit a relative in another village or district. Regardless of how pressing the problem may be, a man will seldom go directly to his father-in-law's house to recall the woman. He goes to the market nearest to his in-laws' village, and seeks his wife there. If he does not find her or any of her relatives, he goes to the part of the market in which people from her village sell their products and sends a message to her family that he will come for her the next day, or that he would like her to come home.

443 A market place is also one of the best places to look for news of a 203 runaway wife, or of any stranger in an area. The Mossi say that women have footprints like an elephant in that they can be found quite easily, but that the footprints are always clearest in the market.

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What this really means is that the market is the main communication center of Mossi society and news of happenings in the region can be heard there. If a person is in an area one can be sure that the people in the market will know about him, or that he will sooner or later visit the market.

The young men who have returned from work in the cacao fields or towns of Ghana and the Ivory Coast add a great deal of color and excitement to the rural markets of contemporary Mossi country. During the time these young men spend away, they give a great deal of thought and planning to the show they hope to put on when they make the grand tour *(mane do)* of their district's market place. The best day for this is the day of the "great market" and regardles of what day many migrants return to their homes, they wait for that Friday before they show themselves publicly.

On the morning of that day, the typical migrant dresses in his best clothes, lends the remainder of his wardrobe to relatives, and together they go to pay homage to the chief during the morning ceremony *(Wend pous yan)*. The migrant offers the chief such presents as a small amount of money, an article of clothing or kola nuts, and replies to the chief's questions about the health and welfare of all Mossi in the area whence the migrant came, the whereabouts of "lost" migrants, the nature of the work the migrants were doing, and so on. As soon as the young man receives the chief's permission to leave, he goes to the market where he is quickly surrounded by *griots* who accompany him in periodic circumambulations of the market place, drumming and singing praises in honor of his ancestry. The migrant is also greeted warmly by his many friends to whom he then gives presents of money, beer and kola nuts. He acknowledges the general praise for having brought goods and clothing for his relatives and takes pride in seeing these relatives dressed in the cloths and clothing he has brought them. If young and unmarried, the migrant also seeks to take advantage of his new-found importance to make the first overtures to available young women or to renew his relationship with former paramours. Towards evening before going home, he rewards the *griots* with money and bear. Many a migrant attempts to prolong this feeling of grandeur by visiting other markets and by dressing up on subsequent grand market days, but after a few weeks he is re-incorporated into the ordinary market routine, and has to make room for the other newly-arrived migrants.

The market is also the place where important rites marking the changing social status of individuals are carried out. Under normal circumstances, the ceremonies attending the birth of a Mossi child are performed at home. When a woman has a number of stillbirths or